

THE Hudson Review

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir:

I am a Hindu and am quite used to reading misrepresentations of Hinduism and of the Hindu way of life, particularly in Western journals. Most of the misrepresentation is understandable and arises merely from lack of knowledge, not deliberate distortion. I must say, however, that in "From an Indian Diary" (THE HUDSON REVIEW, Spring, 1971) Joseph Bennett achieves a report which is in many ways comparable to Miss Mayo's *Mother India*. Though much smaller in scope and performance, it succeeds in presenting as damaging an image of the Hindu, and, I am afraid, of the Indian generally as did the other. Mr. Bennett is no doubt extremely knowledgeable about everything Hindu, having lived in Asia for the past two and a half years, as your note on the contributors informs us, and now making his home in Kandy, Ceylon. But alas, how utterly in the reverse everything seems to him from what it seems to us, the (benighted) Hindus! I can understand how he feels about the "brown sahibs" and the "babus," about Maharashtrian fanaticism and Hindu inhumanities, about the cremations at Banaras and the leprous beggars at Jagannath Puri. Most of the sarcasm, I supposed is justified whether the immediate provocation is the life of Bombay's notorious Falkland Road or the ridiculous figure of Gandhi, the "Great Soul" who presents difficulties "even for the sculptor accustomed to the grotesqueness of polymorphic Vaishnavite iconography."

One concedes at once, of course, that Mr. Bennett has the freedom of his views and of his convictions, however formed, regarding the wrong-headedness or depravity of the "Congress" leaders. Even so, one finds it difficult to see how anyone not prompted by sheer malice could write such a sentence as this: "If the Congress could not lay claim, as the successor government, to Burma, Ceylon and the Straits Settlements, which had once also been under the sway of the Governor-General in Calcutta, they must at least stand fast in their claim to Muslim Kashmir, West Punjab, the Sindh and East Bengal" (sic). One shudders to think what "political" mischief may lurk behind such innocent-looking statements. And it is not merely Congress or Gandhi on whom the sharp lash of intellectual irony falls; a Hindu concept like the Dancing Shiva comes handy for continuous mockery. These are to him legitimate occasions for irony and mockery, for Hinduism, as he seems to conceive it, is a most barbarous and hypocritical system of exploitation of our fellowmen. Mr. Bennett cites two instances of Caste Hindu savagery to represent what he calls "the actual day-to-day realities"—I do not know if he has taken the trouble to verify the facts or has simply relied on newspaper reports—and goes on to say: "The essence of Hinduism is status, and lack of move-

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And Coming this Spring

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A Study of the American Novel in the Nineteen-Sixties

by Raymond M. Olderman

The controlling metaphor of the novel of the sixties is the image of the waste land, not the "American Dream." The form of the novel continues the American tradition of romance but moves specifically toward the fable, using black humor to evoke and describe dual emotions and ideas, juxtaposing painful experiences with exorbitantly inadequate responses. Fact and fiction have become completely indistinguishable; individual alienation has led to the driving need to affirm life and deny death. Mr. Olderman discusses thirteen novels in detail to illustrate his vision of the theme of the sixties.



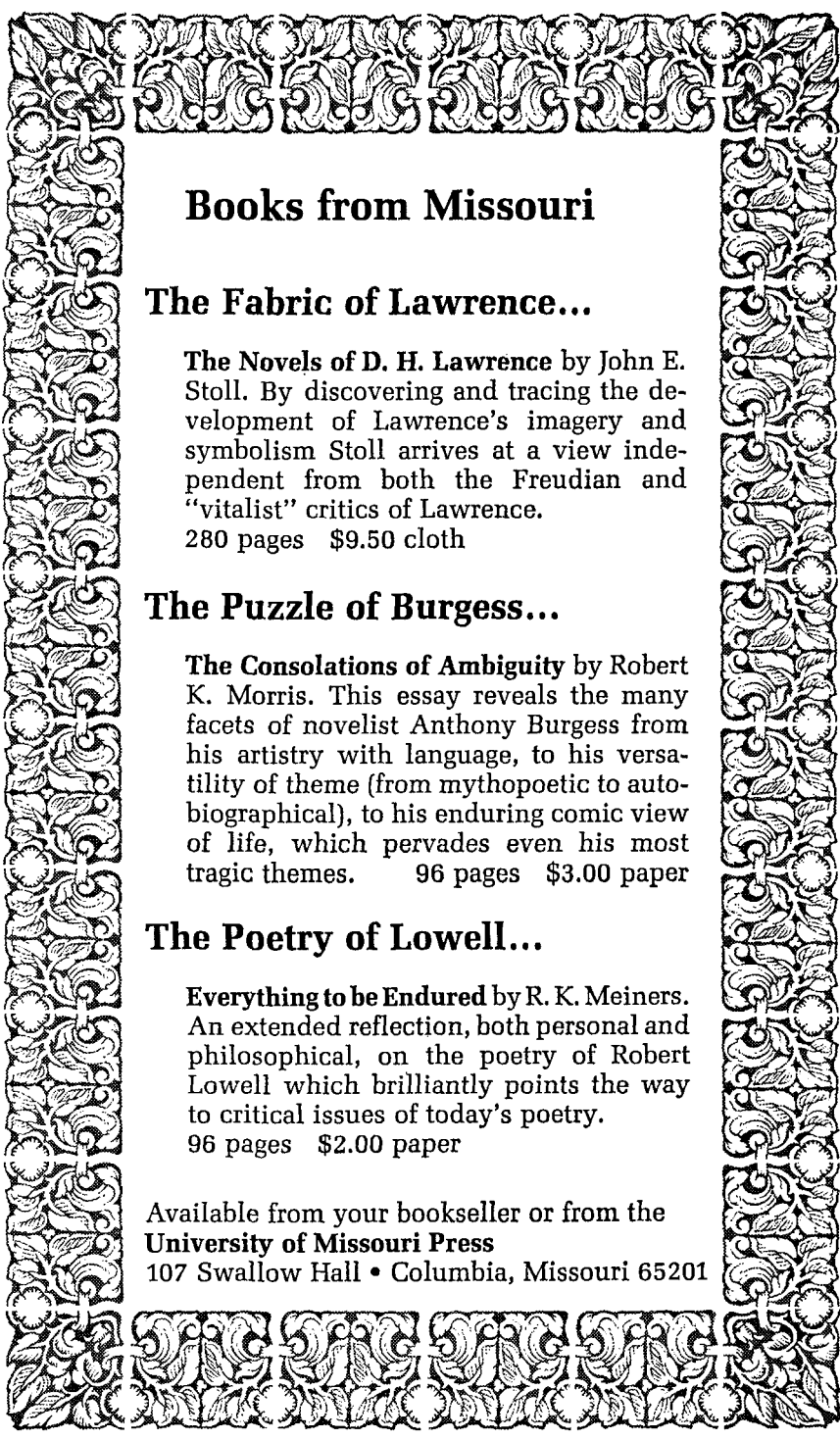
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ment . . . From the Marxist point of view, and to the despair of Moscow and Peking alike, Hinduism is a disease. . . . nowhere else is the concept of status so absolute and unchanging. This is why the cause of the Untouchables is dead; this is why official statistics reporting the annual increase in population at only 2.5% (13,000,000) are false; this is why the birth-control program, reaching only the already urbanized, will never touch the villages, the orthodox, or those who have dedicated their lives to Shiva. How can grain be released from a prosperous irrigated village in the Punjab to, say, a starving rainless one in Bihar? Who will give the orders to release it? What committee of village elders and politicians would ever dare give the orders to release it?"

I have hardly come across anything so devastating, not excluding reports of those who have a special interest in the denigration of "Hindu India." The statements are particularly venomous because they have the air of being conclusions arrived at through repeated corroborative experience. In fact, they are little more than the sort of opinion which may serve as an excellent example of the arrogance of half-knowledge. Each of the statements—from the question of the brutal and unchanging nature of the status-ridden Hindu society to the assumed impossibility of there being a sense of integration between the different regions of India—could indeed be debated fairly if the purpose had been honest discussion. But here these occur as something axiomatic and all the worse for being a part of the general innuendo of the whole piece.

What saddens one is the sublime confidence displayed in making these large generalisations and the fact that a whole people, their religion and their way of life should be so stigmatized by choosing to look at their worst features, as though with malice prepense. This has been done before and will be done again. But there is one thing. If the whole situation is as thoroughly bad as Mr. Bennett makes it out to be, it is a wonder how even the semblance of a unified country could be maintained so long. What is even harder to explain is that the country has maintained its national identity through the application of democratic principles and procedures. (I cannot say, of course, that Mr. Bennett will not question that.) One remembers how some time ago, in the 50's, I think it was, Selig Harrison wrote about the "dangerous decades" India faced in which, he cogently argued, there were only two stark alternatives before the country—some form of dictatorial regime or total disintegration. When I had the good fortune to meet Mr. Harrison I remember the difficulty I had in trying to convince him of the possibility that Hindu society itself might be capable of change. I have since realized the utter futility of trying to persuade foreign experts on India who are so confident of their knowledge of Hinduism that what Hindus themselves feel about it all from "inside," so to say, may also have some relevance to the actual situation.



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No, there doesn't seem to be any question of Mr. Bennett's being "mistaken," or even of his owing to such a possibility. What still surprises me is that an intellectual of his standing, writing for a journal of the prestige and authority which *THE HUDSON REVIEW* enjoys, of which moreover he was a founding Editor, shouldn't have felt any qualms about making his report so unrelievedly negative—shouldn't have thought it necessary to be a little more balanced and a little more just in his strictures. I must envy Mr. Bennett his serene self-assurance.

V. Y. KANTAK

Baroda, India

Dear Sir:

My argument is not with Hinduism—the burden of the diaries is perhaps an overly unrestrained admiration for Sivaism—but with a political organization, whatever the nominal party affiliation, that economically exploits the rural proletariat.

I am not a partisan of Marxism, except in some theoretical and historical aspects, and merely point out the contrast between points of view; the unlikelihood of any ideological penetration of India by Marxism is what is intended to be shown.

As to the territorial ambitions of Congress leaders in the 1947 period, the case is well documented; the fact that the present regime continues its forcible occupation of Muslim Kashmir indicates the continuation of a policy. I am no partisan of Pakistan, as the diary demonstrates.

The Shiva Nataraja is presented in reverential terms, as evidence of my awe and wonderment at the force and vitality of Hindu beliefs in a world where other religions seem dead.

The description of Falkland Road is aimed at demonstrating that such conditions in India are no different from those in the countries of the West, and the Far East. The sameness is the point.

The cremations at Benares are treated with a sense of awe, wonderment, reverence and admiration. The emphasis in the treatment of Jagannath and his brother and sister is on their expression of life and joy; a sense that has evaporated from other religions; several times I refer to the futility of Muslim beliefs.

As to the lack of integration between different regions of India, my statements are not politically motivated. It is a real, and immediately evident truth. In the prosperous, westernized, well-educated, and privileged city of Baroda, in the prosperous, scrupulous, and self-respecting state of Gujerat, with its well-regulated administration, Mr. Katak

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may have little idea of conditions in more impoverished areas, distant from his own.

In general, he has the viewpoint of the well-educated, Anglicized city-dweller; divorced from the rural proletariat except as a source of casual labor, and insensitive to the extraordinary power, the violence and poetry and poignancy of Sivaite practices and beliefs; instinctively they regard these as primitive and to be ashamed of, as evidences of backwardness. My point is the uniqueness and, in addition, the type of salvation to be attained through such practices, a salvation unavailable to the West, or to the Far East.

JOSEPH BENNETT

Solo, Indonesia

Dear Sir:

I read Joseph Bennett's article with great interest and found it fascinating. It is, of course, not possible to do justice in so few pages to the great cultural richness and diversity of India, to say nothing of the contrast and interaction of the traditional and modern. Mr. Bennett's effort, extremely literate, is rather long on adjectives and short on analysis, neglects the significant political and economic development which has taken place here, and magnifies the negative in experiences where my reactions have been more mixed and frequently positive.

I lived here from 1943-46 and the advancement in this country since that time, politically, socially, culturally, intellectually, in agriculture and in industry has been little short of phenomenal. The second largest country in the world is still a functioning (sometimes falteringly) free government where the people are supreme, which is something that can be said for few countries in this part of the world.

KENNETH B. KEATING

*Embassy of the U.S.A.
New Delhi*

Notes on Contributors

PATRICIA MEYER SPACKS*, a professor of English at Wellesley College, has published five books of criticism dealing with eighteenth-century poetry, the most recent of which is *An Argument of Images* (Harvard University Press). She is now working on a review of books by and about women, which will appear in the next issue of this Review.

EUNICE LUCCOCK CORFMAN* is a short-story writer and freelance journalist living in Washington, D. C. with her husband and four children. In progress are a suspense novel and a non-fiction book on alternatives to jail for criminal offenders.

ROSELLEN BROWN*, a recent escapee from Brooklyn, lives in Orford, N. H., with her husband and two small daughters, and teaches part-time in a small-town Vermont school. She has had stories published in various magazines and her book of poems, *Some Deaths in the Delta* (University of Massachusetts Press), was a National Council of the Arts Selection for 1970.

RICHMOND LATTIMORE, the noted poet, translator and classicist, lives in Rosemont, Pa.

JOHN LOGAN's most recent book is *The ZigZag Walk* (Dutton). His selected and new poems will appear later this year from the same publisher. He is editor of *Choice* and a professor of English at SUNY, Buffalo.

RICHARD PEVEAR lives in York Harbor, Maine. His essay, "On the Memoirs of Nadezhda Mandelstam," appeared in the Autumn, 1971 issue of *THE HUDSON REVIEW*; his poems in this issue are his first to be published.

GUY DAVENPORT teaches English at the University of Kentucky. His story, "Robot," will appear in an early issue of this Review.

GERALD WEALES is the author of *Tale for the Bluebird*, a novel, and *Clifford Odets*, a critical study. His next contribution to this Review will be an essay on Edward Hopper. Mr. Weales lives in Philadelphia.

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PATRICIA MEYER SPACKS

Free Women

Ella says drily: "My dear Julia, we've chosen to be free women, and this is the price we pay, that's all."

"Free," says Julia. "Free! What's the use of us being free if they aren't? I swear to God, that every one of them, even the best of them, have the old idea of good women and bad women."

"And what about us? Free, we say, yet the truth is they get erections when they're with a woman they don't give a damn about, but we don't have an orgasm unless we love him. What's free about that?"

—Doris Lessing, *The Golden Notebook*

There are those who can rise above life, transform it, free themselves, and for these the revolution is not necessary. I can see how necessary it is for those who cannot escape into creation, create an illusory world, those who cannot dream or create an individually perfect world.

—*The Diary of Anais Nin, 1936-1939*

THE DISTINGUISHED "EMANCIPATED" WOMEN who have written about themselves in our century often reveal the persistent impossibilities of feminine freedom. As women approach freedom, they find it receding; as they accept limitation, it comes to look strangely like its opposite. Colette is first liberated to write when locked into her room and ordered to produce by a domineering husband who publishes her work under his name; Beatrice Webb yields to the intellectual control of an admired husband, even while consistently referring to him as "my dear boy." Simone de Beauvoir struggles against her sense of Sartre's superiority, hence dominance; she writes in *The Second Sex* a passionate chapter on "The Independent Woman," but imagines this figure in terms so exalted as to seem unrealizable. A much less ambitious artist like Ruth Gordon demonstrates by her recent autobiography's coy evasiveness the degree to which mere assertion is beyond her; she thus oddly recalls *A Room of One's Own*, in which Virginia Woolf insisted upon female dignity in a style whose elegant elaboration apologized for her presumption.

But even Lillian Hellman, working in a more "liberated" era and in a Hemingwayesque style which makes no apologies, exem-

plifies in her memoir, *An Unfinished Woman*, the degree to which feminine freedom may depend on ignorance, derive from fantasy, and produce paradoxical limitation. Miss Hellman dreams of living successfully by masculine standards: honor, courage, aggression. Her stories of triumph, considered as testimonies to the possibility of feminine freedom, thus have an ironic edge, of which she seems unaware. She relates Hemingway's praise of her: "So you have *cojones*, after all. I didn't think so upstairs. But you have *cojones*, after all." Although she tells him to go to hell, she treasures the episode. Such praise, defining her difference from the rest of her sex, testifies to her distinction. She can spit in Dashiell Hammett's eye, literally; the capacity makes her worthy of the companion. And she can endure bombardments, travel with the Russian Army, defy Hollywood moguls; she is the equal of any man. She sees the relation between men and women as a battle, and believes reflection on the difficulties of a woman's lot to be reprehensible weakness, "stuff proper for the head of a young girl."

However ugly her battles, she fights them. Often she wins, although her account of Hammett records his abundant victories. He asserts his power by creating a conflict and making her back away from it. By the time they reach the corner, he declares, she must decide never to discuss a certain subject again; otherwise, they will take permanently different directions. She must stop "juggling," maneuvering relationships, or he will leave her. He will not dine with a house guest who bores him; he will ignore her good friend Dorothy Parker, however embarrassing his refusals. When she rebukes him for his injustices, his insistence on his own way, he grinds a burning cigarette into his cheek to keep himself from doing it to her. "We never again spoke of that night because, I think, he was ashamed of the angry gesture that made him once again the winner in the game that men and women play against each other, and I was ashamed that I caused myself to lose so often."

Miss Hellman's shame at causing herself to lose—as women so often do—reflects the "masculine" orientation of her pride: Hemingway's praise of her for having "balls" is to the point. But it reflects also her selective blindness, a curious quality of her memoir. Although its author's interest for the public at large must

depend on her reputation as a playwright, the narrative dwells hardly at all on her experience as a writer. Her accounts of her loves and of her work are oblique, as if neither aspect of experience were vital to her (although the real meaning of the fact may be that both are too vital to be shared). Her summary comment on Hammett, with whom she spent thirty years, is deliberately but disturbingly flat: "He was the most interesting man I've ever met." Her most analytical comments about herself are that she was "difficult" or "headstrong"—adjectives which classify her as her parents might, from without, but which provide little insight into her inner workings. The cumulative effect of her lack of self-penetration, her apparent uneasiness in love-relationships, her reluctance to contemplate her own writing, her acceptance of a travelogue version of her experience, is to suggest that her central effort has been to create, for her own benefit as well as for others, a character to meet masculine standards. This is not a mere "image": her life substantiates it. The life of constant action (in this case "masculine" rather than "feminine" accomplishment) rests on a foundation of intense self-concentration. Lillian Hellman's work has been to make a self, rejecting in the process many traditional concomitants of femininity.

Self-absorption creates freedom: the freedom to manufacture a more satisfactory self from the headstrong, difficult, unruly girl—always her father's "rumpled daughter"—so inadequate by standards of ladylike behavior. Miss Hellman's acquired strength appears to make bearable for her her occasional discovered weakness; this is a truth she reveals without seeming ever to understand it. "There may be a need in many of us," she writes, "for the large, strong woman who takes us back to what most of us always wanted and few of us ever had." Strong women and strong men have clearly been important to Miss Hellman. She devotes three chapters of her memoir to describing four central figures in her life, all dominating personalities. Her yearning for dependence, her delight in discovering others, men and women, at least sometimes more forceful than she, suggest that the freedom to be weak may be as vital to a woman as the freedom to be strong. But vulnerability is dangerous—that she knows with full awareness. Only the strength of self-obsession and determination allow the memoirist space to construct a self, to make her yearning for masculine accomplishment into fact.

At the opposite extreme from Lillian Hellman, Anaïs Nin appears to take pride in "losing." The published volumes of her diary emphasize her unfailing self-sacrifice, her willingness to live without so much as a pen while supplying her writer-friends with typewriters, her eager yielding to others' demands. It is true that this pattern was directly responsible, Miss Nin declares, for a psychic breakdown, but her commitment to the values of orthodox "femininity" remained unchanging. Yet she is also committed to an ideal of personal freedom, which she explicitly associates with the life of imagination—with "escape," the "illusory," "dream."

The counterpart to the story about Lillian Hellman's "*co-jones*" is an episode centered on Anaïs Nin's breasts. She complains to her analyst, Dr. René Allendy, that her breasts are too small, asking for appropriate medicine. "Are they absolutely undeveloped?" the doctor inquires. She replies no, then: "As I flounder in my descriptions, I say: 'To you, a doctor, the simplest thing is to show them to you.' And I do." The doctor begins, she reports, to rhapsodize: "Perfectly feminine, small but well shaped, well outlined in proportion to the rest of your figure, such a lovely figure, all you need is a few more pounds of it. You are really lovely, so much grace of movement, charm, so much breeding and finesse of line." Shortly thereafter, we discover that he has "lost his objectivity"; he can no longer help her. She reflects, "I asked Dr. Allendy to help me as a doctor of medicine. Was this quite a sincere action? Did I have to show him my breasts? Did I want to test my charm on him? Wasn't I pleased that he reacted so admiringly?"

Instead of Lillian Hellman's vocabulary of battle and endurance, Anaïs Nin uses the language of self-deprecation and self-doubt. She avoids talk of "winning" as she modestly records her victories over the succession of people who fell in love with her: Henry Miller, Henry Miller's wife, her father (he reappears after having deserted his family years before, and soon begins to fantasize that everyone will think her his mistress, then loudly to regret that she is in fact his daughter), Dr. Allendy, Dr. Otto Rank, who succeeded Allendy as her analyst, an Indian revolutionary, a French astrologer. Yet the need to triumph as well as the intermittent compulsion to "lose" is the same as Miss Hellman's, although the arena is different.

Unlike Miss Hellman, who claims realism as one of her virtues and berates herself even for introspection, Miss Nin commits herself explicitly to the value of imaginative reconstruction of reality and to the centrality of writing in her life. Suffering from the twentieth-century problem of fragmentation, she solves it as a diarist, and defines her freedom as the product of her writing: "Because writing, for me, is an expanded world, a limitless world, containing all." But her real "work" appears to be self-contemplation and self-display, of which writing is only one mode. The source of her artistic energy, she believes, is her femininity. Love, service to others, those traditional forms of feminine expression, are other aspects of her self-presentation. "Yes, I see myself always softening blows, dissolving acids, neutralizing poisons, every moment of the day. I try to fulfill the wishes of others, to perform miracles." Despite her obsessive introspection, she conveys a view of herself in some ways as external as Lillian Hellman's self-portrait, because her concern is so much with the creation of effects. Her sense of freedom depends on her ability to manipulate those effects, to control her environment (different rooms painted different colors to encourage different moods), her clothing ("original"), and her companions, in order to show herself to advantage. When she gives birth, in agony, to a six-month fetus, dead at birth, she reports, "Towards eight o'clock I had several spasms of pain. . . . I combed my hair, I powdered and perfumed myself, painted my eyelashes. At eight o'clock I was taken to the operating room." Using all the paraphernalia of feminine attractiveness, she insists on loving and being loved, on working and having her work valued, on her symbolic position, as Woman, at the center of the universe. Demanding freedom, she declares herself to have achieved it.

Much more openly than Miss Hellman, Anaïs Nin admits the great importance in her life of writing, publication, and relation with others. She seems willing, in fact, to admit just about anything. One does not feel that she is trying to form herself in any particular mold; she quite simply loves and displays whatever she happens to be at any given moment. Yet the sense of limitation is as strong in her lengthy account of a "free" life as in Lillian Hellman's. The Hellman memoir suggests that the cost of freedom from relationship is emotional impoverishment and restric-

tion, but the cost of relationship, for such a woman as the author, is likely to be submission, emotional limitation. Miss Nin's diaries emphasize her resort to frequent bouts of psychoanalysis to rescue her from the desperate restrictions of an untrammelled life. Absorbed in narcissism, she flounders among the multitude of selves she perceives. Committed to fantasies of feminine power, she involves herself therefore in endless responsibilities to others. Her self-display requires an audience, her audience makes demands, her freedom eludes her. Her relationships lead her back only to herself. It seems a strangely symbolic fact that her husband has disappeared, apparently by his request, from her published diaries. The stillborn fetus might, for all we are told, be a virgin birth: the figure of Anaïs Nin, surrounded by others, exists nonetheless in a terrifying isolation of self-concern.

All autobiography must rest on a foundation of self-absorption; men as well as women indulge in self-manufacture and self-display. What is perhaps peculiarly feminine about the autobiographical writing of Lillian Hellman and Anaïs Nin is the obsessiveness of its implicit or explicit concern with the question of freedom, psychic and social, and the nature of its revelations about freedom's limitations for women. But one may also speculate about the essential femininity of what may be called "defensive narcissism." For Ernest Hemingway or Norman Mailer, writing about themselves, narcissism is a mode of aggression, a way of forcing the world to attend. In woman writers, even writers so assertive as Lillian Hellman, so exhibitionistic as Anaïs Nin, the characteristic note suggests something close to desperation: it is as though they were writing to convince themselves. The ordering of experience in memoir or diary, the implicit assertion that this life makes sense, seems in these cases a way for the author to remind herself of the value of her own experience, to hold on to the meaning of her life.

The note is particularly clear in the recent capsule autobiographies of two young women committed to Women's Liberation as social program and as personal style: Ellen Willis ("Up from Radicalism: A Feminist Journal," *US Magazine*, 1969) and Sally Kempton ("Cutting Loose," *Esquire*, July, 1970). Both are concerned with political and personal freedom for women. Both reveal the close connection between freedom and fantasy, with

similar images: Miss Kempton describes herself lying in bed beside her husband, wishing she had the courage to bash in his head with a frying pan; Miss Willis half-seriously suggests a future in which women will express their political rage by killing men. Yet such aggressive fantasies coexist with the crucial feminine fear of desertion: both women confess, paradoxically, to identical limitations of their sense of possibility—they share the fundamental terror of losing their men. And both share also a repetitive, emphatic tone which suggests that, however public their announced concerns, they are finally talking to themselves, trying in print to resolve dilemmas that women have never resolved.

"Man, my friend," Colette observes, "you willingly make fun of women's writings because they can't help being autobiographical." Women's fiction reveals more sharply than direct forms of autobiography the dimensions of the feminine problem of freedom, clarifying some implications of feminine diary and memoir in our time.

In novels written by women in the nineteenth century, when social liberation was hardly a real possibility for women, the connection between imaginative vitality and psychic freedom was clear and striking. Charlotte Brontë's passionate heroines, existing in conditions of artificial social isolation— orphaned heiress, poor governess, English teacher in a foreign land—asserted their imaginations as alternative to the deadening conventionality that surrounded them. "My sole relief was to walk along the corridor of the third storey," Jane Eyre explains, ". . . and allow my mind's eye to dwell on whatever bright visions rose before it—and, certainly, they were many and glowing; to let my heart be heaved by the exultant movement, which, while it swelled it in trouble, expanded it with life; and, best of all, to open my inward ear to a tale that was never ended—a tale my imagination created, and narrated continuously; quickened with all of incident, life, fire, feeling, that I desired and had not in my actual existence." Elizabeth Gaskell, less dramatic in her evocations of the imagination's yearnings, allows the central figure of *North and South* to look out the window at night, see a poacher, and find herself—despite her irreproachable credentials as minister's daughter—sympathizing and identifying with him. But Charlotte Brontë's tempestuous spirits invariably find fulfillment in marriage to a dominant

man, and Mrs. Gaskell's Margaret, after enduring the full experience of desertion (first her mother, then her father, then her kindly godfather, dies), after experimenting briefly with independence in the doing of good works, subsides contentedly into an unimaginable marriage. And indeed, given the detailed exposition of the lot of old maids in Miss Bronte's *Shirley*, it is difficult to conceive other viable alternatives for these young women: they can sustain their freedom only in their imaginings.

In the twentieth century, social possibilities are greater, and the image of the "free woman"—often promiscuous, often intellectual, priding herself on being emotionally undemanding but often seen nonetheless as "castrating"—has been established in fiction by men and women authors alike. The most self-conscious and elaborate study, in imaginative terms, of the "free" woman's problems is *The Golden Notebook*, first published in 1962, now read with passionate involvement by college girls who have difficulty believing that women of their mothers' generation confronted the dilemmas Doris Lessing describes, which seem to the young uniquely their own. Five of the novel's sections bear the title "Free Women," a phrase surrounded by invisible inverted commas of steadily increasing emphasis. From without, from the point of view of society at large, Anna, the novel's heroine, and her friend Molly seem to lead "free lives, that is, lives like men." Anna is, in every accepted social sense, free: from financial pressures and domestic ones, from the blindly accepted restrictions of conventional morality, from traditional class-definitions, from inarticulateness, ignorance, stupidity. She is, for exactly these reasons, to men an appropriate object for casual lust: when their wives go to the hospital to have a baby, they expect to be welcomed to Anna's bed. Her "freedom" is thus a means of her victimization.

In her own self-perception, she is bound by her physical nature as woman; every month her period makes her "feel helpless and out of control." Her emotions limit her possibilities: particularly the diffuse and irrational sense of guilt which she shares with women in general; and, even more emphatically, her felt need for love and protection. And the nature of society and of her responses to it severely restrict even her imagination of freedom. The novel's central symbol is her "writer's block," her inability

to create in communicable terms, caused partly by her sense of how inadequate is any individual response to social horror. Imaginary Vietnamese peasants look over her shoulder; the challenge of reality invalidates every rendition of the real.

So Anna is in fact far from free. Her personal political situation thus reflects the international one rendered in the final section of her red notebook, the one devoted to the Communist Party:

The red notebook, like the black notebook, had been taken over by newspaper cuttings, for the years 1956 and 1957. These referred to events in Europe, the Soviet Union, China, the United States. Like the cuttings of Africa in the same period [recorded in the black notebook], they were about, for the most part, violence. Anna had underlined the word "freedom" whenever it occurred, in red pencil. When the cuttings ceased, she had added up the red lines, making a total of 679 references to the word freedom.

Freedom is only a word, its implications always contradicted by reality, and the idea of a free woman is as illusory as that of a free society. To make freedom a fact is the central effort of all political struggle.

In Anna's personal feminine politics, the response to felt limitation is fragmentation. Women have long been accustomed to divide their lives into compartments; Anna's mode of keeping things separate, isolating parts of her experience in individual notebooks, although it is more complicated, literary, and self-aware than that of most women, has the same meaning. Her reply to the threat of chaos, which makes freedom meaningless, is to create false orders; she thus becomes an enemy of possibility.

But the notebooks contain also the seed of possibility, for they record not only fact but its imaginative reshaping. Only the yellow notebook is intended for fiction, but all four notebooks contain it, since precise linguistic rendition of simple actuality is unachievable. Language necessarily mediates between fact and imagining, transforming experience into meaning. Language is for Anna the only conceivable means to freedom. Her experience produces dead ends, defeats teaching nothing but hopelessness; yet writing about experience can redeem it. The lessons Anna must learn are taught her in dreams: salvation comes through the release of the subconscious. *The Golden Notebook* ends in a

chaos of recorded and imagined experience, with the reader unable to tell for certain which is which. It ends also with considerable emphasis on the fact that a novel, this novel, has been written—the single clearly redemptive fact, a fact of freedom. Freedom is only a word, but the word has power.

Writing is Anna's work, for a long time her emblem of the impossible. It does not provide the freedom of escape, as Anaïs Nin claims her writing does, but of integration: the containing and ordering of experience. It is an alternative to experience which points up the difficulties of a woman's finding freedom directly in her life. The problem of relationship, for the fictional character, Anna, as for the living women, Lillian Hellman and Anaïs Nin, focuses the perplexities of femininity. Anna's consciousness that she needs the love of a single man dominates her understanding of all that happens to her. Recognizing that it makes her out of tune with her life and her time, she yet has no control over the need. A complaint frequently made about *The Golden Notebook* is that its failure to depict any emotionally adequate men amounts to a serious falsification of actuality. But the paucity of good men helps to focus the problems of good women—"good" in quite a new sense. "For women like me," reflects Ella (Anna's "fictional" version of herself), "integrity isn't chastity, it isn't fidelity, it isn't any of the old words. Integrity is the orgasm." Ella, like Anna, experiences orgasm only with men she loves. And love is, for a woman, part of *wholeness*—integrity in the root sense.

To be a whole human being is the heroine's central struggle. Wholeness is, finally, the necessary condition for freedom: and it is, for Anna, unattainable. The ambiguous ending of *The Golden Notebook* records two conspicuous defeats—Molly's marriage of convenience, Anna's job at "matrimonial welfare work"—along with the partial victory of Anna's freedom-through-imagination in her writing of the metaphorical golden notebook, the novel. Molly and Anna have recognized the impossibility of wholeness, which depends for a woman, the novel suggests, on connection with another. Acknowledging the severe limitations on their freedom, they resign themselves to working within them: defeat and victory are the same. The condition which makes ultimate freedom impossible is the human condition, the same for men and

women. But because women must have love, not only for orgasm but for integrity, their struggle is perhaps more intense, their triumph less conceivable, their partial freedom more entirely dependent on imagination, than those of men.

Such, at any rate, is the assumption on which much of *The Golden Notebook* rests. Molly and Anna imagine that the emotional needs of men and women are different; although they declare that this difference defines masculine freedom, their tone reveals their contempt for the emotional superficiality and exploitativeness which they associate with the male. The amplitude of sexual possibility for men is, from their feminine point of view, an index of moral inferiority. The novel depicts limited men, associates such limitation with masculinity, declares it to be "freedom." The difficulty of a woman's achieving comparable freedom becomes a subtle emblem of her virtue. To differentiate between the sexes in such terms may be seen as yet another operation of "defensive narcissism": self-love disguises itself as humble acceptance of things-as-they-are, betrays itself by the nature of its evaluation of the Other (i.e., the masculine), but provides protection by embracing limitation while seeming to regret it, and by defining feminine limitation in flattering terms.

In *The Four-Gated City*, Doris Lessing grants that the masculine need for love is as fundamental as its feminine counterpart, but she also explicitly declares narcissism the means of salvation. What in *The Golden Notebook* seemed a link between fantasy and freedom is here in fact an identity. The novel's significant definition of freedom is provided by psychotic Linda. "I keep quiet about what I know," she says. "I have to, you see. . . . That's freedom, isn't it? Everyone has a bit of freedom, a little space. . . . That is freedom. . . . That's mine. It's all they let me have. They wouldn't let me keep that if they knew how to take it away. But if I say to them: I don't hear voices, you've cured me, the voices have gone . . . they can't prove anything. That's my freedom." Her freedom is her madness, and her privacy in it. Martha Quest, the novel's heroine, comes to believe that madness is, or is the product of, true insight; her own "work," she decides, is to achieve equivalent insight herself.

This work becomes part of the battle of being a woman. As consistently as Lillian Hellman, Mrs. Lessing in this novel em-

ploy military metaphors to describe feminine activity, here understood as largely defensive. Martha has to defend others from the petty and major ills of the world, and, more importantly, to defend herself from encroachment: to create and preserve her own freedom. Her effort involves rejection of love and marriage, finally a gladly-accepted sexlessness. She expresses gratitude at the fact that young girls "borrow" her clothes, the paraphernalia of feminine attractiveness. "The rejuvenation a young girl gives her mother or an older woman is a setting-free into impersonality, a setting-free, also, from her personal past."

The solution to the problem outlined in *The Golden Notebook*, then, of the limitation to freedom implied by a woman's inability to have orgasms without love, is to eliminate sex as well as love from one's life. The solution to the restrictions implicit in all personal relations is "a setting-free into impersonality." Critics have complained about the "science fiction" final section of *The Four-Gated City*, in which dedicated "seers" and "hearers," who have developed to a high degree capacities formerly identified with madness, help to save the world, or pieces of it, from total annihilation. But the disturbing quality of this section, its sense of remoteness, its theoretical tone, in fact dominates a large part of the novel's second half. As Martha concentrates more and more on her inner life, the outer world becomes (not only to her: to the reader) increasingly attenuated. Relationships multiply, but their complexities are stated rather than felt. Sexual possibilities continue, but they are not important. The world moves toward its destruction, the political and social scene reflecting the unsureness of individuals: in a sense this is the novel's subject. But it does not feel important either, except as a weighty demonstration of the urgency of Martha's efforts toward self-discovery. Only this exploration of her own inner life matters.

Martha's external conduct is that of the "good" woman: she devotes her life to others. Her inner life, on the other hand, a life of obsessive self-concentration, denies the real significance of others and makes it clear that, in her case at least, the good woman's actions, however socially useful, do not reflect her essence. The asserted paradox central to *The Four-Gated City* is that self-obsession of Martha's kind can produce social salvation; analogically, the horrifying physical mutations caused by radiation and other

forms of contamination may involve psychic alterations which will likewise contribute to the world's redemption. But the problem of individual feminine salvation dominates the novel, which seems to assert a solution to that problem. Martha Quest, living a life almost entirely formed by the needs of others, lacks the external concomitants of freedom but achieves the inner independence which comes from intense self-commitment, accepting the dangers of self-immersion. Her creator appears to claim that such solipsism, multiplied, may save the world; but the novel suggests rather that this kind of freedom, like others, may become itself a trap.

Indeed, the suspicion that here too is a trap emerges strikingly in some of the most recent fiction by women. Mrs. Lessing's own latest novel, *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, has a masculine protagonist whose problem is an intensification of Martha's, and Linda's. Imprisoned in his own madness, he sees in its fantasies sources of redemption for the world, but his insight is incommunicable. He can only return to sanity and meaningless community. Joan Didion's novel, *Play It As It Lays*, develops the plight of a woman, who, separated from her husband, has the external conditions of freedom but is destroyed by her own psychic demands: she is imagined as writing in an insane asylum. Ann Richardson Roiphe, in *Up the Sandbox*, juxtaposes a mundane feminine existence with fantasies of "liberation" which help to preserve the mundane while appearing to challenge it. In an era of widespread fascination with madness and romantic speculation about its power to lay hold on truth, women novelists, sharing the fascination, also convey doubts—often apparently inadvertent—about its viability.

But the idea that women may find their most significant freedom through fantasy or imagination need not imply any commitment to madness. Colette, sanest of writers, demonstrates how imaginative freedom can create new freedoms of actual experience. Her richest vein combines autobiography and fiction with a daring which is perhaps particularly feminine. In *Break of Day* she confronted her own immediate literal situation: a woman in her fifties is sexually involved, perhaps even in love, with a man in his thirties. The woman—the fictional, or semi-fictional, Colette—sends her lover away, reminding the reader how often she has described renunciation and loneliness before.

I should be thenceforward like the woman I have described many a time, that solitary upright woman like a sad rose which carries itself the more proudly for having been stripped of its leaves. But I no longer trust in what I look like, having known the time when, while I was painting this lonely creature, I would go to show my lie, page by page, to a man, asking him, "Have I lied well?" And I would laugh, as my forehead sought that man's shoulder, and his ear that I nibbled, for I could never get over the belief that I had lied.

This time, too, it is a lie: the real Colette married her youthful lover and lived happily with him until her death. It is the kind of lie that derives from imaginative dwelling on possibility—the kind of lie from which one learns. "And I haven't taken too long to understand that an age comes for a woman when, instead of clinging to beautiful feet that are impatient to roam the world, expressing herself in soothing words, boring tears and burning, ever-shorter sighs—an age comes when the only thing that is left for her is to enrich her own self." Exercising imaginative freedom, Colette has arrived at her own version of what Martha Quest accepted in welcoming a "setting free into impersonality." But how rich and wise is the Frenchwoman's acceptance, involving as it does not mere rejection of youthful sexuality but a willingness to explore the possibilities of a new stage of experience. Such exploration uses the freedoms of imagination to illuminate and transform the restrictions of actuality. It employs solipsism to destroy itself, embraces limitation in order to surpass it, demonstrates the literary possibilities of feminine limitation and feminine resource. Self-concentration is the novelist's subject and her method; it leads her to the understanding which enables her to look hopefully outward.

For the vocabulary of battle or escape, Colette substitutes a language of reconciliation. The difficulties of feminine freedom, as suggested by Hellman, Nin, and Lessing, are inherent in the actualities of feminine experience. To arrive at freedom, these women indicate, through direct self-presentation or fictional creation, is to triumph over actuality. The qualified triumphs they adumbrate depend at least partly on denial or avoidance: Hellman denying significant difference between the sexes, Nin avoiding self-confrontation by self-display, Lessing's heroines retreating from intolerable experience into the wider expanses of conscious

or sub-conscious reshaping of it. But the imagination can also lead toward acceptance. Colette's loving but unsentimental attention to details of the natural world is one mode of her most characteristic psychic maneuver: to provide such intense imaginative concentration on actuality that its possibilities expand. The limited physical and social life of the middle-aged woman with an impermanent young lover (*Break of Day*) or of the elderly woman crippled by arthritis (*The Blue Lantern*) is a fact to be embraced rather than avoided. Embraced, such facts deepen in meaning, to imply not only the necessity but the potential value of pain and limitation. Colette's capacity for acceptance, her genius for reconciliation, repudiates the despair of such books as *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*—that despair which declares immutable the gap between the real and the imagined.

More inevitably than men, perhaps, because of their social condition, women have come to the realization that the mind is the fullest sphere of freedom. The fruitful interchange between imagination and reality which Anna, in *The Golden Notebook*, rejected in theory but demonstrated in fact, through writing a novel; which Martha Quest adhered to as a program but denied in experience—this interchange is the object too of Colette's explorations. By her "lies"—her *fictions*—about loneliness, she investigates her own emotional possibilities and is enabled to confront her life more fully. She suggests that through the liberated imagination talented women, like talented men, may demonstrate that freedom derives from acceptance rather than avoidance of the real.

EUNICE LUCCOCK CORFMAN

Her Time Gone Out of Joint

ALTHOUGH IT WAS HER OWN DAUGHTER Meg who kissed her cheek, leaving with the man she said she wished to live with, it was to the dim memory of Lily Pevtsova that Eve's mind, fatigue-fuddled, insistently returned. Eve's legs extended on the sofa occasionally flexed, at long intervals she sipped from her glass or drummed her fingertips along the coffee table, through the long night the high room otherwise quiet, the large apartment deserted. Beyond the terrace railing the horizon's zinc lightened to chrome, Triborough Bridge's fretwork turned silver, the nearer cableloops appeared. Across the street spotlights still weakly gilt the UN's low swaybacked roofline and rearing tower. Muted through the windows the spaced mutter of traffic revved to a drone.

Eve Booth Petranek's childhood was spent in the French Concession of Shanghai. When she and her sister outgrew their amah, Lily Pevtsova became their governess. Mr. Booth, an American steamship company executive, housed his family and servants in a park compound off Avenue Petain surrounded by a stone wall topped with shards of broken glass planted in cement. Lily was young, dark, beautiful, a White Russian refugee without a country. She did not control Eve and her sister with Chee Ying's gutsy epithets and impatient pinches. Instead, she seduced them, porky tomboys seven and nine: Lily made of colored crepe paper, glue and wire, flower costumes for both of them and taught them each a dance with a Russian song to go along. Eve was a rose and her sister a daffodil. One night during the burning of Chapei they performed their singing ballet for their mother and father in front of the fireplace in the first floor livingroom. Lee Sa Foo and Daw Sa Foo came in from the kitchen to augment the audience. Lee Sa Foo clapped longer than anyone, hissing enthusiastically through his teeth, bobbing his shaven head. Eve loved Lily for having made her a star.

But Chiang's army retreated and the Japanese occupied Shanghai. Chapei's falling ash thinned and its red night glow subsided,

the dog fights and dive bombings ceased, the shrapnel collection languished. The sandbag pillboxes on Petain and Rue du Four came down, the refugee camp main shed, intricately lashed bamboo and straw matting covering the soccerfield, went up across the street from the Community Church house, where Eve's mother bathed babies and changed dressings.

Mr. Booth, goaded to illness by stress, came from work after dark and went to bed. Mrs. Booth, increasingly reckless, at meetings would not stand for the Japanese national anthem and in traffic would not stop the Packard at the whistle signaling an approaching car of Japanese officials. Terry, the Booth's fox terrier, was dognapped, while Eve watched, by an old Chinese with a fishnet, who darted from the tool shed, threw the net over Terry and disappeared with the bundle into the willow grove. Three times within as many weeks thieves broke through the dining-room terrace windows and each time the same shirtsoiled French Inspector patiently scrutinized the rugs and locks and congratulated Mr. Booth that Lee Sa Foo carried the silver upstairs each evening at dusk.

All the hot summer of '37, instead of going to Tsingtao or Peitaho or taking the steamer to Wonsan, Eve and her sister stayed home with Lily in the fortified compound. Mrs. Booth worked a shift and a half at the Church house. Two more sheds went up beside the main one. On a special treat trip to the tender to see school friends off going stateside, Eve stared at the Bund's jammed sidewalks of refugees begging, cooking, curled in sleep.

During the long mornings Lily had Lee Sa Foo drag the laundry tub onto the lawn and fill it with the hose so Eve and her sister could dunk and spray each other. For tiffin she spread table linen under a tree and they picnicked on sandwiches with the crusts cut off, pumalo, persimmons and mangoes. She read to them at nap, shampooed their hair every Saturday, starched their slips so they played at Shirley Temple, urged them to be quiet after supper when Lee Sa Foo played his wooden flute on the kitchen stoop as the air grew darker and cooler, until dusk when it was time to bolt the windows and chain the doors and carry the silver upstairs.

One afternoon Eve and her sister climbed a tree by the wall, tied a rope from the tool shed to a limb and laying their father's canvas totebag across the broken glass of the wall swung over and down on the other side. They walked down Avenue Petain to Rue

du Four, past the refugee camp, past the French club grounds, to Compador's at the end of the street. They each had two Eskimo Pies and then they crossed the street to the Chinese mart and bought a hundred and twenty-five coppers' worth of bubblegum, which they secreted in their elastic-legged Brownie underpants, waddling back Rue du Four to meet Lee Sa Foo, charging at them in his torn houseboy coat with pink eyes and flapping slippers, livid to incoherence, who cuffed them, unlocked the front gate, pulled them through and sent them reeling up the driveway, shouting after them as he jumped on the gate to clang it shut and locked it. Tearful, Eve and her sister hid the bubblegum in their wicker clothes hamper and picked up the playroom to please Lily, who placated Lee Sa Foo, so that by supper his humor was returning.

In September, as Mr. Booth's illness intensified, came word that he and his family were to return to the States. But there was no visa for Lily. And no way she could easily support herself in occupied Shanghai. Mrs. Booth spent days indiscriminately angry at the Japanese, the State Department and God, but there was no altering the visa decision. She investigated formally adopting Lily, but that failed, too.

Eve watched while her mother, in long blue morning robe seated at the dressing table, with her curling iron worked deep waves into the hair across her high forehead. "What are we to do!" Eve's mother cried. She was slow to accept there could be something she needed that Eve's father could not arrange. "We could smuggle her on the ship, but even Daddy can't get her into San Francisco." She sipped tensely from her coffeecup, her shoulders contracted in exasperation. "You can finish that if you have it *au lait*." Greedily, Eve jumped off her mother's bed and adding condensed milk, drank the coffee.

By the end of October, when Mr. Booth was taken to the hospital, Mrs. Booth was driven to turn to the one French acquaintance she did not despise, and begged for help. But dozens of accomplished governesses were looking for positions, since many families were leaving. Who needed an inexperienced young Russian who spoke no French and minimal Chinese? Mrs. Booth's friend, however, found an older Frenchman prepared to be interested in Lily. Eve listened to her mother's wild protests.

Lily had become a quiet creature, though she still walked the

grounds with Eve and her sister, looking for mushrooms and weaving dandelion chains. Lee Sa Foo hauled up the steamer trunks, lined them, packed the linens, piece by piece wrapped the Cantonese China in newspaper. Mr. Booth's operation was successful; he would convalesce on the ship as soon as he was judged safe from relapse.

Then the morning Lee Sa Foo and Mrs. Booth rolled the rugs for cartoning, Lee Sa Foo told her that he wished to marry Lily and Lily wished to marry him. Mrs. Booth put hands to her throat and told him, "She does not!" and told Eve and her sister to leave the room. Lee Sa Foo stepped to the door and stood warily watching her, jerking his palm at Eve to go quickly.

Eve and her sister, chewing the last of their contraband bubble-gum, read contraband Big-Little books, wandered the playroom unnaturally enlarged without their toys, dolls and books. Late in the afternoon the Harnsburg's car came up the drive and Mrs. Harnsburg called to them to come down and Eve and her sister gratefully obeyed. Mrs. Harnsburg drove them to her home and said, "You poor sweethearts, isn't this dreadful," and Eve, proudly knowledgeable, said, "No. Lily's going to marry Lee Sa Foo."

That was what may have happened. Eve's memory could only partially reconstruct details, unaware of most, privy to few. She remembered her father's homecoming, only days before they left, Lee Sa Foo carrying him upstairs, she following with his hospital bag. He pawed Lee Sa Foo. "You haven't a Chinaman's chance, you fool," his voice querulous, "not a Chinkee chance in hell." He must have been in pain, not recognizing Eve, frightening her. Wandering the barren house, she interrupted her mother embracing Lily in the upstairs living room, whispering urgently, "Lily! He's kind! They might go to France if things get worse!" Lily startled Eve by betraying that same docile stubbornness that Eve practiced against Lily.

She and her sister helped Lee Sa Foo fill the trunks, wrap the furniture, holding twine and scissors for him, stood at the foot of the ladder to catch the drapes as he unhooked them. Except to give directions he would not talk to them. Mrs. Booth took her meals with Mr. Booth in their bedroom.

On the next to last day Daw Sa Foo got drunk on discarded leavings of the liquor cabinet and laid down full length on the pantry floor. Eve discovered him, knocking his slipper off as she

tried the swinging door, peered around it and saw him glowering at her. She went to her father's bedroom and whispered to her mother, who called for Lee Sa Foo. When they heard no answering "Hai-ah!," Mrs. Booth wiped Mr. Booth's mouth and put his soup bowl on the tray. "Rest, dear, I'll be right back," she told him. They found Lee Sa Foo on the terrace baling hammock cushions. All three went to the pantry where Lee Sa Foo squeezed through the swinging door blocked by Daw Sa Foo's feet and squatted beside him. Raising his arm, Lee Sa Foo took a butter paddle from its hook and thrust it into Daw Sa Foo's mouth. Straddling him, rolling him over, he bent and lifted him by his belly, heaving. A foam of yellow liquid spilled from Daw Sa Foo.

Mrs. Booth took Eve by the hand to her bedroom where they lay down on the mattress and Mrs. Booth hugged Eve and wept. Eve curled in her mother's arms and cuddled. Her mother gasped in broken whispers. "They must not! It's a terrible thing." Eve knew without at all understanding why, that of all the bewildering events that had been happening, her mother meant Lily's wanting to marry Lee Sa Foo. She stroked her mother's arm.

Eve Booth Petranek sat up and craned her neck to see the mantel clock read six-twenty. Brian would be in flight until ten tonight. She had already called Geneva for him to call home. She swallowed the last of her drink. Squinting at the UN's dazzling slab now directly refracting into her eyes the risen sun's pale light, she said tiredly, "Dear God." She padded to the library and phoned the desk. "Lucy, would you cancel incoming calls for the morning, except long-distance?" She added without conviction, "Unless Meg calls. And unless Jeremy, too." She looked at her calendar. "I'm canceling the lunch. Have the car brought up for two-thirty. I'll drive myself." Forestalling the woman she said quickly, "You're too good, Lucy. Bye-bye." She cradled the phone and slowly tilted her chair backwards, contemplating how to spend the hours she had just expensively purchased.

Meg's room was beyond the kitchen, renovated maid's quarters behind double doors to give her privacy and quiet no matter how late buffets and dinners might run. Eve lay down on Meg's bed. For twelve years Brian had been State Department Foreign

Service and the family had moved about. Jealously, and because the times had changed, Eve had hired no amahs or governesses for either Meg or Brian Junior, who had died at school age of erysipelas complications during a New Delhi stint. Eve trundled them with fierce possessive joy up and down elevators, along Avenues and Boulevards, through the parks of a half dozen Capitals, first in a perambulator, then on leashes hooked to braided leather harnesses Brian had made for them in Manila, then by the hand, trotting beside her.

She marveled as Meg grew from ringleted pudgy baby to winsome child, as Eve had not been, to shy and graceful adolescent, painfully lovely to her mother. Where Eve's youth had been nothing but, Meg never had an awkward age. Thrown upon each other in expatriate life deployed around Brian's comings and goings, the three hoarded their leisure for each other, lavished it on aggressively American pastimes—baseball, vicious Monopoly, Sunday breakfast pancake orgies. When Brian was away, Eve cut protocol corners, skirting rudeness to be with Meg. They learned together to use the sewing machine, practiced Hindi lying on their backs beneath fans, at night took turns reading Steinbeck and Dos Passos spreadeagled on the sheets under netting.

Unconstrained by diplomatic reflexes that had over years shaped Eve into a well-regarded hostess, sensitive, generous, acquiescent, an asset to Brian, Meg thrilled Eve with disquiet by her shrewd, untinctured candor. Meg's temperament was direct, like Brian's, though less steady. She knew her likes and dislikes instantly, liked venting them, only gradually and incompletely accepting rules to inhibit them. Eve's likes and dislikes were frequently less clear to her than other people's, and she was likely to vent them freely only if they augured happiness. She relished Meg's transparency.

"There shouldn't be funerals," said Meg at fourteen, impatient at a spaced cortege of cars slowly circling Dupont Circle. "There should be one tank where all the bodies go." Eve remembered Brian Junior's funeral. "The people left behind would have no way to get rid of their grief."

"They shouldn't be unhappy. It's selfish. *I* don't want a funeral. Throw me in the garbage." Meg peered at the black car passing and lifted her lip. "It's none of their business."

"In Senghor Park, one Sunday a month, the British had a brass quartet play from three to four. We'd go say hello to Brian

Junior. It always surprised me how many people I knew had someone out in Senghor Park."

"Mother! *They* weren't there. Their *bodies* were." Exasperation distorted Meg's subtly modeled lips. Her faces were most ludicrous the more serious she was. Now her lifted upper lip almost completely blocked her nostrils. "Brian's not in Senghor Park."

"All the same."

"It's stupid superstition."

"There's the end. We'll be moving in a minute."

But before bed Meg came in pajamas to her mother's room. She sat on the arm of Eve's chair, took her wrist and idly hefted it. She kissed the back of Eve's hand. "You can have a funeral for me if you want one."

Brian left the Foreign Service for the UN post. The Petraneks signed a long term lease on the large apartment that became their first permanent home the week before Kennedy was shot. Meg finished the last two years of high school at the UN International School. Eve compressed her obligations into the morning and early afternoon so that at four wherever she was she could head for home to wallow in the coke culture Meg and her friends brought to the apartment. It pleased her to keep the refrigerators stocked with the sleazy foods they consumed in quantity. She enjoyed lying on the sofa in the library browsing through the *Times*, eavesdropping as they rattled bilingually in the living-room. They charmed her by scrupulously cleaning the kitchen whenever the table or extra help signaled she and Brian would be entertaining in the evening. She loved best the free nights, when she served Brian and Meg dinner in the library and they dawdled over coffee, Meg and Brian arguing international affairs until past time for Brian to open his briefcase and Meg her books.

Eve at forty tended to fleshy ripeness around the abdomen, controlled by abstinence from solid food till cocktails. Meg at adolescence ate constantly, yet remained sleek dancing to her records, a melange of acrobatics, ballet from brief lessons in Beirut and the jerking modern movements picked up from friends. Meg spent hours shifting from bed to mirror listening to Leadbelly and Guthrie, nibbling olives, singing with them in a reedy soft soprano artlessly heartbroken. Eve, lightly haunted by her own

graceless adolescence, discreetly listened with a happiness that swelled her throat.

Then Meg went off to college in Minnesota, leaving Eve childless for the first extended period she could remember. She was busy. She accepted an unofficial fifth committee assignment acclimating fixed term new members and their wives and children to New York. She recovered their luggage, took them grocery shopping, drilled them in subway procedures, rescued them from Brooklyn and Far Rockaway, had them for luncheons, cocktails, buffets, tried to sooth their strangeness and comfort their homesickness.

Meg's return for Christmas revealed to Eve how parched the three months had been. She bewildered herself and Meg by tears at the airport. They flowed again at the Fifth Avenue decorations, a Salvation Army trumpet, at the ballet watching Coppelia, their Christmas morning breakfast, unprovoked by any emotion Eve could detect. She gloated to have Meg hugging her, talking on the phone, playing her records again and eating from the refrigerator. The Petraneks cut their holiday duties to the bone. The one dinner dance they gave was a reunion for Meg's graduated high school class, a decibeled and writhing success, which sent Eve to her bedroom at three a.m., again afflicted with unwanted tears. Eve saw Meg off on a flinty New Year's Day, both exhausted. Meg complained, "It was wonderful, Mummy, but busy." She shot her upper lip, obscuring her nostrils. They hugged briefly and then Meg was gone.

January brought the first letter mentioning Jeremy. He had been with the Mississippi Summer Project. He was in school now but he was going South again. Meg did not say whether he was Negro. The February letters did not mention him by name but were full of Sheriff Clark and Dallas County, King and registration. Eve read them uneasily and searched the *Times* for help. But in the *Times* King and Clark were eclipsed by the Statue of Liberty conspiracy and Brooklyn boycott rioting. On the 21st Malcolm X was assassinated in the Audubon Ballroom. Eve's uneasiness increased.

In March Meg called long distance, after midnight, catching Eve slightly groggy from nightcaps waiting up for Brian. "Meg! Are you all right?"

"Mum! I'm going to Selma. Can you wire some money? Jeremy's in the hospital."

Eve grasped the mouthpiece and stood up, tightly pinching the bridge of her nose. She had sense enough to ask first, "Is he all right?"

"I don't know. He can talk, anyway." Meg's voice quavered. "They were clubbed and teargassed. He's had stitches around his eye." She hiccuped softly and Eve knew she was crying.

She kept her voice casual. "Where is Selma, dear?"

"In Alabama. We're going to march to Montgomery, it's the Capitol. We're going down in the morning. I wanted you to know where I was and not worry. And I need some money, Mum?"

Eve's voice momentarily sidled upwards. "Not worry?" She fought it down. "Meg, honey. Help me. I need to know much more." She fished an ice cube from her glass and pressed it to her forehead.

"O.K. The Birmingham kids and Evers. Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman. Now Jimmie Jackson."

"Please, that's not what I mean."

Meg, abruptly peremptory in her no weaseling voice said, "Mother. Daddy's been politicalized all his life. Why can't I be?"

Eve sank to the sofa, laid the ice on her tongue, licked her fingers and finally said, "Meg, listen? These are wild times. Isn't it natural I don't want you hurt? You're excited. Will you think carefully if what you can do there is possibly worth the risk? I'll do the same. And call us back in the morning?" Only now tension reached her, making her breath short. She did not want Meg to hear.

"Mum? You can't stop me, you know."

"Sweet, I know that, too. Goodnight."

By the time Brian arrived, Eve had torn from the pantry stack of papers all the clippings from Selma and Montgomery the *Times* had printed in a week. Brian got on the phone to wake old Washington friends, but their information was hardly clearer than the clippings. Only there was a new rumor a clergyman had been killed.

Meg called back at six. Brian took the phone. "Bunny, that's about the biggest powderkeg in the world right now. I'm asking you for the sake of your parents to stay where you are." Eve tried to read from Brian's face what Meg took long to say. Occasionally

he shook his head. He rapped his knuckles on his knees. But he did not interrupt. When she finished he began to answer quietly, then less quietly. Eve knew it was futile before he did. He cried, "Meg, you're a peaches-and-cream belle of seventeen, you have never been south of Monticello in your life, if you think you can march through hopped-up deepest redneck Alabama in the middle of a bunch of Negroes and not get them and you smashed up you are out of your brains nuts in the head." He covered his mouth and closed his eyes, then tried to recoup. "Meg? I'm sorry. We are worried sick is why, you understand?"

Eve hadn't guessed till Brian's lapse how serious he thought Meg's danger was. It frightened her even while his fatherly fear struck her as poignantly corny. She feared loosed general violence spewing out of control like floodwater, Meg wild-eyed, witnessing random gore.

Brian talked another few minutes, his head dipping lower, until Eve motioned, asking for the phone. He gave it to her. "Sweet, do you know where you'll be staying? Where can I find you? I mean I'm coming down, too." She caught Brian's hand. Over the wire Meg's voice was tremulous, grew jubilant. Eve's voice rose. "I'm not a convert, Margaret, I'm your bloody body-guard!" So rarely was Eve angry with Meg, both Brian and Meg quieted. She kissed the back of Brian's hand. "What's the hospital where Jeremy is? Leave a message there. I'll drive. I'll bring money. Sometime tomorrow." She handed the receiver back to Brian to let him say goodbyes and went to find a map to see where Selma was.

She beat Meg there, arriving in early afternoon. On the ride along route 80 from Montgomery she did not rush, curious to see signs that might explain the fuss. Out of Montgomery the pink highway narrowed to two lanes. She saw Black Angus grazing pasture just sprucing to green, scrubpine vistas, flat red farms in freshly harrowed patches, vaguely ominous swamps lightly steaming, occasional houses but few people, white or black. Short of Selma the road broadened to four lanes again, helmeted troopers patrolled on foot, traffic thickened the last two miles, crawled bumper to bumper until it crossed the Alabama River.

She found the hospital and Jeremy registered, but no message from Meg. She was directed to Jeremy's ward and led to his bed. Most of his skull and one eye were wrapped in gauze. He was not

just Negro, his skin was the color of eggplant, almost purple. Under the sheet his body was still, seemed thin and quite long. His head didn't move but waited until she moved in front of it.

"Mrs. Petranek? Meg said you'd be along." His voice was hoarse, light, slurred. He might be sedated. She felt she stood at the margin of his attention.

"Are you going to be all right?" He had a thin neck and long slanted jaw.

"Nope. But I'm sure getting out of here. You heard news?"

"I just got here. I'm parked outside." Her lungs seized a deep involuntary breath. "I guess I'd better go find a hotel and some lunch."

He gave a brief high wheeze she thought at first was meant to be a laugh until she saw his face was contracted in pain. "Lady, don't do that, you might get your car hurt," he said softly through it. "Uh, my damn . . ." His good eye was shut in a tight squint.

"What's wrong? Can I do something?"

His voice rushed, but grew no louder. "The light is drilling a hole in my head. You don't mind, it's making me a baby." His legs shifted under the sheet.

She looked up and saw that the fluorescent light suspended directly over his bed shone full on his face. "Well, let's get you moved. Or wait a minute." She opened her bag and felt for her sunglasses. She fumbled them open and bent over him. His enormous purple hand came from under the sheet to fend her off. "Hold still, Jeremy." She propped them on his nose, but the bandage was too thick over his other eye to let them lie level. His hand poised. She threaded the curved wire around his ear. "That's the rough idea." His hand slowly settled the glasses against his cheek and nose. Now she couldn't tell whether his good eye was open or shut.

He sighed. "Thank you, Mrs. Petranek."

"I can call you Jeremy?"

"About the hotel. You better not try. Get to Brown Chapel. They'll get you someone to stay with. Find Mrs. Lolly. Tell her I sent you."

She felt him at the end of his energy. Nevertheless, she pushed him. "What about Meg? I'm here to be with her."

His hand flopped. "Go see what it's like. What you can manage you can have."

Eve couldn't reach Brian on the overloaded trunk lines until the next night. "Where have you *been!*" his voice shouted.

"I can't find Meg anywhere. I have signs on the bulletin boards all over. Every preacher I meet is looking for her. You never saw so many preachers, Brian. Jeremy escaped from the hospital. I don't even know if he's Slick or Snick. He's got my glasses. Brian, it's probable he's lost his sight in one eye. It's not just him. It's been going on for months. Brian, I hate Sheriff Clark."

Eve found Meg two days later. By then she and the pink-mudcaked Buick were part of the ferry service out of Brown Chapel, she knew Sylvan Street and her way in and out of town. She had a crew that helped her load and unload and two or three bosses that kept her scheduled. A lowslung VW pulled in ahead of the Buick as she was unloading three crated drums of sauerkraut. Out of it slowly emerged six bent, stiffly moving bodies that in the street performed a brief pantomime of gingerly stretching. "Meg!" called Eve suddenly and the fifth one turned. They had started out, all six, in the VW, but it had broken down for a day and a half near Columbus.

Eve was touched that Meg, honoring the implicit agreement, stayed close to her, allowing herself to be bodyguarded, though her friends quickly dispersed. There was plenty for them both to do. In the afternoon Jeremy found them. He was talking to Meg before Eve was aware he had come up behind them. She turned to see her daughter catch his hand in both of hers and put it to her cheek.

"'Lo, Mrs. Petranek," he said. He was in denim and sneakers, the bandage off his shaved head, but still over his eye, bulging white behind her sunglasses. The absence of hair made his head appear unnaturally small, his skull's minuscule ridges conspicuous as a baby's. He was a foot taller than Meg. He rested his elbow along the top of the Buick. Imperious with her at the hospital, he now seemed sheepish, grinning into the middle distance. Both he and Meg seemed to regard the conversation a responsibility now appropriately hers, and she could think of nothing to say. She could discover in herself no secret scrambling from mortification that he was Negro. Eve had watched Meg at parties abroad, at school, in their own apartment, dancing with privileged and precocious young men of many colors, though not ever that she could remember with an American Negro. Still, she did not for-

get Brian's lonely Kenyan assistant who had confessed to her he felt barbed wire behind barbed wire lurking to bar feeling behind every light face he met. She was not aware of barbed wire, but she watched Jeremy as she did all young men, for clues to how they treated Meg. Meg said into Jeremy's walkie-talkie, "Calling all cars. Calling all cars," and Jeremy took it away from her. "Don't you fool. You break my machine, there's no more around."

Eve asked if he had news of the march. At being addressed by her he straightened and brought his sneakers together. "Oh, yeah, but it won't be anything anyone I know has in mind. There's more miles of preachers, strangers keep coming, I hear the movie stars now, they can't all turn around and leave when they have come all the way here. Two months ago, this street at this hour I could count nine people. A month ago I still knew what was going on. No one knows that anymore."

Jeremy rode with them to the Dunbars', who were putting up Eve and now Meg. Atheryl Dunbar pressed Jeremy to stay for supper and finally he did, putting away so much kale and chitterlings and biscuit bread Atheryl called through her kitchen window to tell her neighbor about it. Later LBJ made his speech, and a small crowd drifted through the dark towards the Dunbars' front yard and the Buick's turned up radio to hear it; they leaned on the open doors, propped themselves against the tailgate, squatted, dimly visible, in the road. A porch swing's chains rasped. Matches flared white and died. From the near blackness two women's voices courteously talked LBJ along: my, my; that's right, too; speak out; true, true, Lord; hear him say. Just as drifting, the crowd left when it was over. Mr. Dunbar opened cokes for Meg and Eve and they sat awhile in the night cool.

Next day came rumors the march injunction would be lifted and those were followed by others that in Montgomery Sheriff Butler's men had attacked. Two of Meg's VW friends had been there, but neither of them was hurt. They returned with large voices and brutal anecdotes. Eve felt impatience with them. She supposed the two like everyone else were enduring the same intermittent sleep, diet, lack of privacy, nervous fatigue, soiled clothes that she was. Yet she disliked their larking, gloating lust for a climax they smelled coming. Forty-eight hours more veteran than either of them, she felt kin to the muttering Snicks and Slicks helplessly watching their voter registration labor balloon-

ing into this vast, inebriated circus playing along the lip of pandemonium. She watched Meg's chortling friends and had a brief, intense image of the steps where they sat peopled with chanters suddenly galloped upon, Eve dizzily reeling separated from Meg, Meg's hair streaming across her bloodied face, moaning from a sliced eyelid like Jeremy's. It was the vague apprehension she had come here with, incited by the boys' stories into particularity. And though she felt a spurt of fear, she did not wish that she and Meg were somewhere else than here.

The night after, late, the 17th of March, from the walkie-talkies, then from the first cars arriving at Brown Chapel, came the first news from Montgomery, King in the drizzle hoarsely shouting through a giant cone that the injunction was lifted, there would be a March from Selma to Montgomery. Meg and the Buick crew hugged the riders and ran to the basement to tell the cooks. Eve left the car in case it was needed and walked the five blocks to tell the Dunbars. Jeremy brought Meg home after midnight, Meg still in high glee, on a talking jag that went on after he left, through toothbrushing and undressing and after getting into bed, until Eve fell asleep.

On the 19th, unloading garbage cans from the Buick parked on a grade, Meg leaned in the back door to pull the last one out, jarred the door, which slammed closed on her leg just above the ankle, breaking it.

Pale but dry-eyed through a period of shock, the emergency room wait, the X-ray, the setting of it, the cast application, Meg let tears begin to spill at dawn, waking Eve on the other half of Mr. and Mrs. Dunbar's bed. She whispered, "I can't stay, it wouldn't be fair. I'm no use any more. It's not my food, they'll need the bed. I have to make room." She pulled the pillow from under her head and pressed it against her face with both hands to smother her crying. When at last she let Eve lift the pillow to give her air, let her wipe her eyes with the sheet corner, stroke the hair off her forehead, she still kept a piece of pillowcase between her teeth, breathing heavily through her nose, while they watched the strengthening sunlight slowly grain the big oak bureau, speckle the wallboard, pink the ruffles on the Dunbars' twin lampshades.

Eve called Brian, who exuberantly began talking before she could. "Listen here, Eve, things look lots better. Even Bunche is coming down. So is half of City Hall. I'm trying to get some-

one at both Craig and Maxwell for you to call if you have to and don't be timid about getting through." It took a few minutes for him to absorb the reversal. Eve told him, "She breaks my heart but I think she's right. I'll drive her back to school. She's awfully low now and I think the leg hurts."

Hugging goodbye, Meg, Eve and Atheryl Dunbar wept. Jeremy was waiting at Brown Chapel with a goodbye gift of a bottle of aspirin. He sat on the floor of the Buick, his long legs out the door, beside Meg, sideways on the back seat with her cast on a blanket. Eve left them alone and went to look one last time at the empty, faintly moldscented sanctuary where she first swayed and sang that we shall overcome.

Crossing Pettus Bridge, on 80 heading for Montgomery, Eve and Meg silently watched the landscape that, come Sunday, the Marchers would be walking through. It wasn't until past Montgomery, going north to Birmingham that Meg told Eve, "He's not coming back to school. What am I going to do?"

Meg came home for the summer and brought a classmate, Hildrid Dentzen, a dark, intense Swiss girl with deep, round bosoms and tiny waist and an obsession to master slang her hochschule's English texts had neglected. She said, "Shall we split?" and "That is like tough, man," from the side of her mouth in a soft, precise voice that remained hopelessly cultivated. Her father wanted an American medical degree for her and was sending her for college as well, hoping this would gain her access to a better school. She did not particularly want to be a physician, but shrugged pleasantly. Hildy's and Meg's language competence earned them underpaid temporary summer jobs in the Secretariat. With Brian in Geneva, Eve was grateful for Hildy, who made Meg talkative. To have Meg's chattering strike her as she came into the apartment or picked up the phone or went into the kitchen was for Eve a grace the pleasure of which did not diminish as the weeks went by.

In August Jeremy found a ride up for a weekend. Eve was startled to see Meg turn shy, it was Hildy who intently grilled him for his job description and way of life until everyone was comfortable. Hildy was not scandalized that there were people in Lowndes County who were disenfranchised. She gave her shrug,

"In my Canton all the women have no vote. Many of them prefer it."

Jeremy scowled, first disbelieving, then incensed. "Then those ladies are a bunch of kept broads." With his hair grown back, somewhat heavier, he was still too gangling to be goodlooking. The sliced eyelid dropped asymmetrically, but it was not disfiguring and the eye itself had half vision. For Eve he reexcited sharp nostalgia for the Selma week. She was happy for a time to be as quiet as Meg, letting Hildy manage.

Hildy's violet eyes widened. "Broads? Kept? You mean mistresses? Hookers? No, they are respectable! Excellent wives. What do you mean!" She inhaled and her bosom swelled.

Thinking he had made her angry, Jeremy began to clown, nodding slowly. "Kept and broad, Hildy baby, every bugger one."

Meg touched Hildy's arm. "Jere, you're being cute. Cut it out."

But Hildy was not angry, only tracking his slang. She suddenly crowed, "A political metaphor! I see! Yes, you are correct." She laughed loudly. "They are!" Abruptly she hesitated. "I am."

The closeness of the hour on the terrace was not repeated for Eve. She was unaccustomed to how amiably rude they were to each other and to how blue their language was. But she liked cooking for them. Hildy and Meg alone nibbled. With Jeremy they gorged and burped. Dispensing broiled steak and tomatoes, corn, milk, peach ice cream at the long steel kitchen table, Eve felt wealthy, bountiful, blessed.

She didn't see Jeremy for another year, though he visited Meg at school. It was a hard year for Brian. They had hoped to get away for two weeks in January and couldn't until May, just before he had to leave again for Geneva. He wanted her to come with him this time, but there were so many complications—her schedule, the work with the newcomers, and besides, she was reluctant to be so far from Meg in case of some emergency—she decided against it. Alternating weeks of jammed social calendar when Brian was home with months of evenings alone when he wasn't, Eve found her alcohol intake had grown to over a halfgallon of bourbon a week. Ashamed, she tried to cut back and could not sleep. She gave up social drinking, restricting herself to nightcaps after ten, and found she was stoning herself, twice waking up on the sofa in her clothes.

She clipped the *Times* and weekly magazines for articles on the Movement, added Atheryl Dunbar's letters and started a scrapbook. She wrote her weekly letters to Brian and Meg. When June came, she regretted that Meg elected to work in Cambridge for Vietnam Summer and didn't get home at all until after Labor Day for three days of frantic shopping before it was time to leave for school again. Meg was thinner and wan and wasn't interested in what they bought. The only time she spoke about Jeremy was with a dour face. "They don't like me down there. I'm sick of that place, he's got to get out of it."

In late fall Jeremy moved to an organizing job in Newark on new money funded by post-riot grants. Meg came home for the holidays with Hildy and the day before Christmas Jeremy drove over with a gallon of Mountain Red and a five-pound bag of walnuts. Hildy baked a blitz torte. Meg and Brian festooned the diningroom with pine boughs from Connecticut. Eve cooked a preposterously large roast and served it on the china Brian claimed the Secretary General's executive office had reserved for the Second Coming. After coffee, too comfortable to move, they stayed at the table listening to Meg and Brian argue first over the Congo and then over Gaza. Flushed with wine and, Eve later suspected, excitement to witness a daughter disputing with her father, Hildy turned to Jeremy, her pink cheeks aglow and black hair burnished by candlelight, crying, "I don't like your Karenga and Stokely! Men always want blood to flow! They waken terrible feelings in me!"

Eve noticed in Jeremy a new deliberateness or fatigue that slowed his answers. He chewed his walnut. "Come up Springfield Avenue. I'll show you why they talk mean."

Eve saw, bewildered, that Hildy was angry. "Don't talk down to me. I am not ignorant of conditions. I am a foreigner. The Swiss are white but were never slaveholders. Some things may be clearer to me than to others. Those men are firstly male. They must show their cattle prods are bigger than Bull Conner's."

Jeremy hooked his elbow over his chairback and watched her across the table. He said mildly, "Hildy, you sure have made yourself at home in the American language."

Hildy's voice wavered. "It's true. It's always studs forcing the world to go their way. Black or white, rich or not, American or Swiss makes no difference, you are the same."

Jeremy relaxed and fiddled with a walnut shell. "Ahah. Some things might be clearer to me than to others. I don't see how it's Stokely's fault Daddy is pushing you to be an M.D. you don't want to be, hey?" He tossed the shell at her.

Hildy ignored it and leaned towards him with urgency. "Why should I trust you?"

Jeremy took Meg and Hildy and Eve to Newark to see his storefront office and the neighborhood that was his territory. Eve drove, Hildy beside her. From the back seat, holding Meg's hand, Jeremy's long finger pointed at this and that. Driving through the sunny cold listening to him, Eve felt a swell of content. His Christmas spent with them, one ritual consummated, now the visit to his home, accomplishing another.

They walked up Springfield Avenue. It occurred to Eve how very many days of her life, like recurring war holidays, she had spent officially touring desolated streets over the face of the earth, banked by gutted shops, ripped homes, gaping apertures open to the sky, blackened and boarded, broken glass and rubble strewn. Jeremy unpadlocked his door and they stepped into his oil and steamed-tarpaper smelling office. It occurred to her how familiar as well was this crowded narrow room in sliding shadow where dogged men recouped by patient piecemeal. In back was Jeremy's living quarters—a cot, a carton of clothes, a card table with a typewriter and a metal chair. She felt sudden pricks, like stumbling into barbed wire. Meg live here? Jeremy was showing Meg and Hildy the shower and stackheater he had installed. Naturally. Where else would an organizer's wife live? Piecemeal she acknowledged what a tourist she had always been.

In early April King was shot. Eve heard it first in the library on the 11 o'clock TV. She muttered, "Brian!" but Brian was in Geneva. Slowly she stood, amazed with pain. Standing, hand over her mouth, she watched the TV. She became aware that she was rocking on her feet, her face stiff in a distended yaw. She wanted to be with someone. Solitude made her pain outsized, sapping her sense. She heard herself whimper. She began to pace to give it space, marching in stocking feet back and forth down the long hall from the living room to Meg's. She could not control her breath; it snorted through her nose or soughing, rasped her lungs. She

was bewildered by her body's strenuousness. Not Brian Junior's death, not Kennedy's had erupted into this. She batted cushions from the sofa. She roamed into the bedroom, seized the begonia and uprooted it, hurled it across the room spraying clumps of soil over the spread. She went out onto the terrace and working her jaws, collected saliva to spit repeatedly into the street five floors below. She recalled that normally she was drinking at this hour. She went to the pantry, took out a quart of Jack Daniels and ceremonially smashed it against the sink faucet, watching bourbon dribble down the drain. Intimidated by her strength, she returned to the library and sank into her desk chair. Empty, she waited for grief.

She stared at the blank TV, not wanting to go to bed. She let her mind play a game—the TV sputtered into color and McAfree announced the news was premature, King's bullet had been removed, his condition was critical—and she jeered at herself. Desperately she desired him alive again to redress how casually she had used him as a private pawn for getting used to Jeremy. She was not entitled to her pain. Jeremy was, even Meg who had gone to Selma for right reasons, even Brian, who placated nations from the Secretariat at long odds. What had she ever done to earn spitting for King? All the same, she needed someone.

She called Jeremy's Newark storefront number. Someone answered and then she waited ten, fifteen minutes listening through the earpiece to scrapings, remote shouts, a thin radio voice. Miraculously then Jeremy's light voice came, "Hey?" and she was giddy with gratitude.

"Jeremy, this is Mrs. Petranek." Eve didn't know what she wanted to tell him.

"Who? Who's this?"

"Eve Petranek. I'm sorry. I needed to hear you. It's so unspeakable."

He hesitated. "Yes. It is," was all he said.

"Jeremy, can I see you? It sounds ridiculous. I need comforting."

"I can't come now, you see. There are these riots here."

She wondered if he was making fun of her and didn't care. "Not now. When you can. Or I'll come there?"

"God, no. I'll come when I can."

She cradled the phone, left her hand on it, soothed by it.

In the morning the announcer reported that King had anticipated being shot; that he wanted sung over his grave, Free at last, Lord, free at last. She bent her head. She cut herself a three inch black band and basted it to her sleeve. All day long it kept her company as she moved among the sympathetic, the curious, the surreptitiously staring. After supper she carefully clipped his picture from the *Times* and added it to the scrapbook. In weary, unbitting languor she spent the evening turning pages of the album, reading, picking out his face in the pictures, now and then tracing a finger over his brow and cheek.

Jeremy came three days later, in the evening, eyes puffylidded and bloodshot, chewing pills for a new incipient ulcer. The meal she had cooked was too rich for his diet. They put on sweaters and sat on the terrace, mostly in silence. He hadn't seen King's funeral and hadn't been reading the papers. "I didn't like him much these last two years. This Resurrection City stuff is garbage to me. I heard the news, the first thing I thought, no you don't, it's still garbage." He swore softly. "It's something how this work cripples your natural feelings." They watched the lights. "It seemed he was always the one to come in at the last hour and walk off with the chips." Jeremy poured milk from the carton. "Then there's the bee-bee and howitzer people on the other hand, who are glad he's gone and are smelly as garbage to me, too." He swung his feet off the lounge and stepped to the rail, looking down. "Then I got these Afrocats over Stirling Street doing this BCD thing, what is the meaning supposed to be of them?" Jeremy swiveled and for a minute recalled the young Lord Jeremy who had received her in his hospital bed at their first meeting. "They dress up in costumes and talk out of a Kawaida primer. Instant Africa. Good Luck." They listened to the traffic's hauling noise. "I am this deviant. I've been Movement and what's left of it going on five years. I'm a veteran with no crowd behind me. I love your ofay daughter and am not about to shake her. No one makes sense to me these days except me."

Eve spoke. "Do you want a crowd behind you?"

Light from the room behind just caught Jeremy's lips curled in a mocking grin. He sipped his milk. "I never did *want* one. It was a sure thing coming. One of the several sure things I knew. That afternoon in the hospital you gave me smoked glasses? I was warned I was losing an eye, crazy with pain, but so sure of things

I couldn't stay in bed, I had to find the action. There was Lewis and Forman already, it would come it had to be me, too. Me and my Meg, we would be the next Jack and Jackie to show what style was. That's how much I knew." He exhaled a soft, exasperated breath that cracked softly in his throat.

Eve peered through the dark at him. His bared self-disgust infected her. She wanted to return it. Wanting that, waking tomorrow, he would not regret it; and also needing to join him. "You're excusable. You were young." She watched closely his dark shadow. "I'm not. I drink too much. I can't seem to stop it." She waited.

He was silent awhile and then said, "I do hate that sickness." He stirred, restless and uncomfortable. "Shoot. That's a surprise. I took you for a happy lady."

As he was leaving, both of them constrained, he stopped in the foyer to take a close look at Meg's portrait, touching it delicately along the jaw. He smiled. "The baby fat. When I first met her at school she was still worried her waist was too big around. The two big worries of her life, voter registration and her waist. Hear this little crooning voice singing how these times they are achanging, she's pinching away at her middle. I never did know what changing time she wanted most." Thinking of Meg they both laughed. Eve said, "It's changing all right." She kissed his cheek goodnight.

She took his empty carton of milk to the kitchen and washed up. She stepped out onto the terrace and unnecessarily folded the cushions in case of rain. She felt sealed in a bond she could never easily retract.

So when Brian and Eve drove to Minnesota for Meg's graduation and Meg spoke of a friend she might bring home to visit, it did not occur to Eve he might be male. And when she met him, she recognized Porter Flynn-Ramsey, one of Meg's UN school-mates who had come afternoons to the apartment. But now he called himself Satya. A golden bristle surrounded his small, full lips under the delicate nose. His hair was long dark blond, densely matted to his round head. He was shorter than Meg, no taller in his bare feet than Eve in her heels, and slightly pudgy. His rug poncho, a tear at the chest revealing hairless pink skin, smelled powerfully. He was not a student, or rather, was an itinerant, unofficial one. The last three months he had lived in one of the girls' dormitories, but for graduation week he had moved

outdoors. To eat, he accepted what the girls brought him or foraged in season or begged from the town's bakery and three restaurants. He spent cold days in the library, though he did not think much wisdom was there, but most of each day, good weather or bad, out of doors walking, watching and reflecting. He refused on principle to work for payment since it was an exploitive relation, though he would work for nothing and would accept gifts providing they were free. In the two years he had been practicing his way he had sometimes been sick and had lost three teeth, but he was clear in his head and his spirit was in peace.

It was difficult to talk to him, after the first exchanges, for he would not talk to Brian at all and only by exception to Eve. He sat crosslegged and straightbacked, his hands loose on his thighs, in the middle of their kingsize motel bed and talked through Meg. When Meg first brought him he had bowed and smiled gently at them and offered them each a handful of grass, ordinary freshcut lawn grass he had been smelling while he waited for Meg to bring him. He declined Brian's offer of a drink, apologizing. Meg explained that he took neither intoxicants, drugs nor meat. When Eve asked him how his parents were he said, "I no longer have parents."

Brian expostulated, "The Flyn-Ramseys? But I thought they were back in London. I'm sorry, Porter."

"I am Satya." Meg explained that he had repudiated his parents.

He was not surly, he was serene; he gave no evidence of wanting to shock. Eve felt, in fact, as if she were invisible to him. If Meg had to explain him, it was because he had lost the habit of words or else had given them up along with meat. He did not seem preoccupied so much as decelerated in his rate of absorption—he took perception slowly and his reaction was deliberate. This took time. Eve would ask a question, Meg at the foot of the bed would translate it, Satya would reflect, trace a curved black nail across his lip, nod, say two words, Meg would explain and Eve would say, "I see."

At the end of an hour Satya unfolded his legs and swung them to the floor. He stood and clasped his palms together, bowing. "I anticipate our home," he said. He looked directly at Eve, gazing for several seconds into her face. At such close quarters she saw that his cheeks were spotted with minuscule blood spiders,

exposure had aged his throat like a sixty year old's. He touched her and she started. "I remember you," he said.

When he left, Brian asked Meg, "Why, honey?"

She kissed him. "Because school's closing and he's run out his string here and he really doesn't have any place to go."

"But why in our house? For how long?"

"How can you expect him to be clean when he moved outside because you parents were coming?"

"I'm off again the end of the month. I can't leave your mother to babysit him. And we've scarcely seen you in four years. What does he eat, honey and locusts?"

"He was awfully sick when he came, he's much better now. It would be stupid to leave him."

So along with Meg's two trunks and four years' accumulated possessions came Satya with no luggage at all. He liked the apartment. On the Thruway and coming up Manhattan from the Tunnel he was inert, looking dully out the window or dozing. He lingered in the foyer for minutes, adjusting. He moved to the middle of the big living room. Then smiling, he stretched his arms high to show thick auburn tufts at each pit. But he did not like the view from the windows. One look at the UN and he covered his face with both hands. "That obscene piety," he said with agitation.

He was no trouble. While Meg slept till noon he roamed the apartment in boxer undershorts, accustoming himself. He loitered through the rooms lightly fingering and fondling. He sat long on the terrace in the sun; he liked bubblebaths. He would not let Eve cook meals for him, but helped himself to melon slices and wedges of Brie. Eve tried to talk with him, but his retarded attention and patient ruminating made it tedious, and his terse replies baffled her. "Are you a drummer, Satya?" she asked as he played, absorbed, with two grooved sticks. He blinked and deliberated. He tapped one stick on the chair arm twice and slightly nodded. "Sometimes." If she kept at it, he would rise, drift towards his room, closing the door.

Meg shampooed his hair. Eve found them in Meg's room on her bed, docile Satya sitting crosslegged, Meg behind him combing out the huge snarls. "You have animals in there," Meg told him.

"You're hurting me," he answered.

Once Meg was awake he spent hours in her room doing noth-

ing at all, watching Meg clean out her closet, sort her clothes, pick through her drawers. He never went out. When Brian was home, wherever he moved Satya was a shadow easing out of sight. Meg made no move to contact Jeremy. She had no plans for the summer or beyond. She put her head on Eve's shoulder. "Mummy, don't push, let me poop awhile."

It was hard for Eve not to push. She thought Satya was neither holy nor preposterous. He was a harmlessly prowling hairless pink pussy she fed and smiled at, aloof, not clever, but with its own intactness. But his closeness to Meg made her queasy. She did not understand why Meg suffered him all day long in her room, why she enjoyed teasing him, combing his hair, feeding him spoonfuls of yogurt mixed with maple syrup. She had to mediate between them and Brian, who after three days wanted to tell Satya to leave. He was irritated with Meg. "She has a perfectly good American across the River, what does she want with this fat Limey Wasp? Why doesn't he go home?" She had committed herself to a sitdown dinner for forty that she did not want to occur with him in the apartment. She wanted him gone before Brian left.

In bed she conspired with Brian, whispering. "Why couldn't we have a reunion? It's a natural thing to do. We'll get Jeremy over from Newark and Hildy down from New Haven. It would be like old times."

And Meg liked the idea of a party. Eve had in mind something like the happy Christmas dinner, but Meg objected that that menu was full of meat and drink, which Satya didn't touch. And, of course, Jeremy's diet was bland now. So they decided against having everyone share the same food; there would be a buffet and everyone would take what he liked. They could eat *al fresco* on the terrace.

Hildy after her first year of med school looked brisk, and tidied, less voluptuous. She kissed Eve and Brian, formally, on each cheek. Jeremy did not take to Satya at all. "Get out of here with that," he said when he saw Satya across the livingroom in his canvas trousers and one of Meg's scarves around his neck. Neither Hildy nor Jeremy were as polite as Eve and Brian had been and Meg was not sitting at his feet interpolating for him. "Go put on a shirt, man," Jeremy suggested.

"It's against his religion," Brian said more loudly than necessary.

"He should wear what he likes," Hildy told Jeremy and began pumping Meg for who had gone where after graduation.

Satya finished thinking and said, "It's not cold," but everyone was listening to Meg.

Eve was confused by the comings and goings to the buffet at different times. No one was eating the same thing, everyone was on a different course, drinking something else—Eve and Brian still on their martinis, Jeremy on milk, Hildy with a wine bottle, Meg and Satya drinking V-8. Conversations went part way and were interrupted or petered out because something peripheral sounded more pressing. Brian talking to Hildy heard Meg talking to Jeremy and wanted to stop and listen. Hildy talking to Eve wanted to correct Jeremy talking to Brian. Satya said little, sitting on a stool near the rail where he could look down and watch traffic and beyond it the white sliver of East River and in dusk the far Whitestone cables strung with lights.

Meg told the story of Satya's coming to the college, her discovery that she knew him and the dorm's conspiracy to keep him. Satya smiled and nodded and fell into reverie.

Jeremy wanted to know, "So what's he doing here?" and Meg said he was their guest.

"Brian's, Eve's or yours?"

Hildy said, "That's none of your business, Jeremy, stop butting and he's right over there with ears so have manners."

Eve suspected Hildy was feeling the wine. She wasn't sure what anyone else was feeling, but she knew Brian was safe. "Brian, what is doing in the Middle East this week?" she asked.

Brian sighed and put aside the newburg he had just begun. "Hard to say," he said. "A breather we hope. Can all use those now and again." And he tried to give them one. Eve liked to listen to his talk, which was wry, civil, laced with melancholy; for Brian had taken his post when the UN's future seemed auspicious and it was so no longer. He strung anecdotes together while they watched the dark climb and the first stars come out.

Satya said, "Lies. Vanity. Evasion"—pointing not directly at Brian but down at his swayback building.

Jeremy put down his custard dish. "Listen, ladybird, why don't you fuck off."

Hildy said, to Jeremy, "Will you stop pushing the world around to suit you?"

Brian said, "It's like old times."

Meg said, "Satya didn't mean Daddy, he meant politics."

Jeremy said, "Hildy, if you don't shut your mouth I will swat your tail."

Hildy said, "You and what military?" It was difficult to see her in the dark, but she seemed to be unbuttoning and pulling off her jacket.

Jeremy's arm seemed to gesture towards her. "Silly. You know I can lick you."

Hildy's breath came short and heavy. "Of course. That should finish me. *Bête*. I'm supposed to owe you fifteen dollars for being white. My share for three hundred years. What do you owe me for three million years of being male?" They heard her fingers snap near his nose. "Pay me!" They heard scuffling and Brian stood up with raised hands. "*Pay me.*"

Jeremy said, "Back off, back off."

Brian switched the light on. Hildy was on her knees, Jeremy's arm was up fending. Hildy said, "You cheats. Muslims treat women the worst of anybody. How come you like that?"

Jeremy offered her his big hand, "Hildy, I'm not Stokely, not Forman, not Muslim, this is your old friend."

Tears spilled down Hildy's cheeks. She sat on her heels and lifted her fists. "How come when you are truly contemptuous of Satya, you say you want done to him what you do to the woman you love? What's a woman supposed to understand from that?"

"That's sick."

"It is. Males are sick as whites. Sicker. They like it sick."

Jeremy handed her his handkerchief. She refused it and opened her bag to use her own. They watched her blow her nose. Jeremy said, "I used to be wild as you and you better stop it pretty soon or you will damage yourself."

Eve asked, "Where's Satya?" His stool was empty. They called. Meg thought he might have gone to bed, but she checked and he hadn't. They went through the apartment, but he wasn't in it. His rug was gone. He seemed to have left.

Hildy said she had to leave, too. Brian went with her to put her in her car and see if Satya might have decided to take a walk. Jeremy wanted to stay but Meg was distracted by Satya's disappearance and after fifteen minutes he gave up and said he'd call her. Eve concentrated on clearing the buffet and starting the

first dishwasher load. She was distraught and to buck herself up began to whistle "These Times They Are Achanging," through her teeth to the thump of the washer blade. But a weariness gathered and settled on her so heavy she closed her eyes and groaned. They were changing and she did not know where she was. She had lost familiarity with them. She tried to remember the last time she had felt at home with the times and thought instantly of the Dunbars' porch in Selma, Meg there, Jeremy looming, the March in the offing. Her mouth was dry. She drew herself a glass of water and swallowed it. The loss was a disabling cramp, her body twisted to be rid of it.

Brian didn't find Satya and Meg blamed herself, but also Brian, who hadn't been cordial, Hildy and Jeremy, who had quarreled, and Eve who had thought up the party. It was no help that Brian was openly delighted to have his last two days without the house-guest. Meg alternated being cold with him for this and polite with him because he was leaving. She was listless in the apartment and wouldn't eat. Eve drove Brian to Kennedy and when she got back to the apartment Satya was there and Meg had filled a totebag and was waiting to say goodbye to her.

Eve had trouble understanding what they were about. "Satya, you can't take our daughter out into the world to live the way you do."

Satya thought and Eve wanted to shake him. He listed his hand. "No taking. We're going together."

Meg said, "Mother, I want to try to live this way. It seems a decent, true way to live."

Eve's voice shook. "I don't see that. It is a freeloading, not to say very dangerous way to live, especially in the middle of Manhattan."

"If you think so, then you shouldn't try it."

"Meg, please. If I could, I would forbid you to go. I'm asking you not to."

Meg smiled and shook her head. Eve felt panic in her throat. It was incredible. Meg could not be serious. That harmless pussy! Revulsion made her shudder. Meg saw it and kissed her cheek. "Oh, Mum. Don't."

"You can't go. Meg, I love you. I beg you." Meg picked up the totebag.

"At least stay until we talk it over."

"Talk," Meg said gently. "Talking is what happened at the party."

Eve bargained, "You can both stay." She felt pressure blocking her ears and heard the sighs of her own breathing. "Please."

Meg smiled again. "That *would* be freeloading."

At the door Satya turned, placed his palms together and bowed to Eve. Meg grinned and said, "I have to learn that." And the door shut behind them.

Eve raised her head from Meg's pillow and looked at Meg's clock. It was two and the car would be brought around at two-thirty. With luck and good traffic she could be talking to Jeremy by four. She sat up and shuffled to the kitchen where she leaned over the faucet and slapped water on her face. It came to her as she wiped her face and she said aloud, in wonder, "I picked the wrong one for Lee Sa Foo." The enormity of the error grew on her. Over the decades she had pitied her mother for fearing him. She had thought herself better than her mother for refusing to fear Jeremy. But Jeremy was not her Lee Sa Foo; Satya, nee Porter Flynn-Ramsay, was. She now feared for Meg as Mrs. Booth in her time, hugging Eve close on the mattress, had feared for Lily.

She went into the bedroom to brush her hair. She pulled on her stockings and put on a suit. She stood in the living room where Meg and Porter with their friends had drunk coke and giggled and pleased her. Every minute that had passed as she watched and listened had been an imperceptible flaking away of what she thought she saw and heard, and imperceptible replacement. Not only the times out there but in this room, too! Appearances, events, gestures, remarks, reactions, loosed like floating particles, everywhere and invisible, inhaled unawares, absorbed through the pores, battening in crevices, corroding, settling on every surface to wait a chance breath, puff, passing draft. It was a fine thick dust around her. On the window panes silently crazing the glass, in the walls breaking frail stress lines beneath the paint, gathered along hidden folds of drape in green mold, underfoot making the floor slippery so that she did not want to move.

ROSELLEN BROWN

Re: Femme

Senator Joseph L. Tender
2366 R St., N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator:

I hope you will forgive me for this intrusion into both your time and your privacy. We at *Femme* Magazine are attempting, in this first year of a new decade, to construct a new image for the young woman who reads our pages. We will continue, of course, to present the fashions she must have to put her best foot forward, and many of the features that will help her to create what we like to call her "special ambience" (makeup and hairdo hints, menu and entertaining ideas, furnishing tips and so on.) I enumerate only because a man who is familiar with the Congressional Record may not have had the occasion to flip through our pages recently! (Your hairdresser undoubtedly provides *Playboy*?)

In addition to these features and the outstanding fiction we have always showcased, we are expanding our articles department with a sharp eye on where today's woman has come from and where she is going. We will print the most penetrating analysis we can, from all corners, in our effort to paint *Femme's* realistic full-length portrait of the American Woman of the 70's. We are working now on a double issue for early next year, a very exciting one we think, to be called: "Beyond Liberation." And this is where (we hope) you come in.

We are putting together a collection of short vignettes, by their husbands, of women we consider to be gracefully "liberated." With all the hostilities generated by the rhetoric and militancy of many of today's girls (yes, we do have quite a few right here in our ranks, and they call us counter-revolutionary, but we are trying to do something about that!) we would like to publish tributes from men whose wives are still charming, still loving partners in marriage, who are probably still, if you'll pardon the candor, wearing their bras, but who have either their own careers or an irreplaceable part in their husbands' careers. Women like your wife. We think our readers would be interested to learn from a famous man of politics how his wife feels about the limelight she lives in, the duties she fulfills as an official hostess, the things she does with her spare time, and how she stays as lovely as she is in her pictures.

We are trying for pieces of about 2-2500 words, to be paid for

at our standard rate (see enclosed). Deadline, say, September 15. (Perhaps a member of your staff could prepare the copy from your notes. We certainly wouldn't object!)

Thank you, Senator, for your time. I do hope you will agree to join the distinguished contributors to the new *Femme*.

Sincerely,
(Mrs.) Harriette Moritze
Editor-in-Chief

Mrs. Harriette Moritze, Editor
Femme
230 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mrs. Moritze:

Thank you for your letter of July 9. I am sending two articles to you, per your request, written, thank you, without the assistance of my staff who have more pressing matters to attend to. Perhaps I should send the first of these to your office address and the other to your home, on the theory that just as we senators do have our private lives, ostensibly conducted at our homes, so do you editors have yours outside the halls of business. And to that life the second of the enclosed may speak; surely not to your corporate half-life?

In any event, even for the delectation of your staff, if the second response should fall into their Arpèged hands, I send both to your editorial offices to challenge your promise of candor. The American Woman Exposed? The true woman, e.g., my helpmeet? I suggest you publish my words as a fold-out à la *Playboy*. Hair and nipples would demand less bravery: the whole woman has them and more. I hereby throw down my gauntlet. Please do (at your standard rate) pick it up.

Yours,
Joseph L. Tender
United States Senate

I. CLOSE-UP: A SENATE WIFE

The last time I had the occasion to thank my wife, Meg, publicly was on the victory stand two years ago where, in the flash of spotlights and popping bulbs I felt as if I were standing drenched in a hot shower, while she was, as always, cool, glowing, and absolutely calm. No one, anyway, listens to those routine-sounding acknowledgements. But now, presuming a willingly, charmingly captive audience, I can broadcast the secret that being a

senator's wife is not as sweet or as simple as it might appear at those well-lit moments.

My Meg:

—waits dinner for me six nights out of seven. She eats with our sons (aged fourteen and seventeen) when they are home from school, but otherwise dines alone, doubtless cursing the caucuses and study groups and other official playground business that keeps me. We employ a cook only for formal dinners; otherwise Meg is alone with her Joy of Cooking. (She does enjoy it and the kitchen is a little United Nations. Her favorite dishes are Korean, German, Greek and Mexican. Her chicken mole is the equal of anything I've had across the border.)

—reads at least three books a week, non-fiction generally. She tells me she has enjoyed *The Naked Ape* recently, *The Greening of America* (which our older son sent to her) and (this has me worried) *Sexual Politics*. Also the historical novels of Cecilia Holland.

—is the best back-up secretary no one could ever hire for a price. If she is unsalaried, she knows she is indispensable (worth how much a week?) as witness the time she answered a call that turned out to be a threat on my life, cleverly pieced together a few vague clues, alerted police and FBI, and finally helped them to apprehend a man insanely angry because (though I had tried) I could not obtain clemency for his son on Death Row. There was no reward for his apprehension but. . . .

—has opinions on every major piece of legislation that crosses my desk and has never been known to mince words. I would describe her as an intuitive liberal, hard-headed but basically a chance-taker and a truster of people. About welfare she says: "I have never met a man who didn't want to work—provided the work was human." About education: "Our children must be taught to think no matter the subject, and to recognize authority alongside freedom. By 1984 our problems will be unrecognizable. Will a child in kindergarten this year be equipped to answer questions that don't yet exist?" About women: "Freedom, yes. But I pity the girl who forgets the first lesson, that the word 'woman' contains the word 'man.' That tells me a lot about what our significance should *naturally* be."

—has changed very little since we married after college nine-

teen years ago. She is, remarkably, more slender than the girl I married, and if her hair color is helped along a little—well, she has that in common with many of the men on Pennsylvania Avenue. I like to think she keeps herself alluring out of respect for both of us and the hundreds of thousands who had faith in us, both of us really, to represent their state and themselves. When she began to tire near the home stretch in our last campaign, she laughed and said “I’d better iron out these circles under my eyes. You never know when people will begin to wonder if you beat your wife!”

—spends a good deal of time being attentive to little things. She is frankly in charge of those sweet spots that I could never get to while I’m attending to my somewhat more salty life. She enjoys sending gifts, flowers, cards for birthdays, a note here, a phone call there, often to constituents who have made special requests or written about problems. She feels that we do our work as a team, each with our traditional duties.

—once warned me, when she disagreed vigorously with an opinion of mine on domestic policy, “You’d better be careful in ’72 or you’ll turn around and find *me* running against you.” So I’m pretty careful. It would be quite a contest.

II. CLOSE-UP: A “SENATE WIFE”

What would you Ladies Incorporated, pulse-feelers of America, say about a woman who

—calls you “Senator” in bed? (Knocks you to the floor, all sharp elbows under satiny skin, and thinks “Dear me, I’ve pushed The Senator out of bed”)?

—touching you, gets newsprint on her fingertips?

—poses for cameramen in the broom closet and looks for voyeurs in the bedroom window? Hoping.

—Ladies, what would you say if I told you I am jealous of my own name?

Which was still Joey when I met her. A college junior who shaved twice a week, up from hardscrabble Southwest farmland. My woolen slacks itched something unbearable because my skin was denim-cured. I spoke about like an out-of-tune guitar, thwanging behind the beat. But I did speak, plenty.

I haven’t recovered yet from what it took to get Mary Margaret

to notice me. I lied so hard, promising that I was worth one glance of her simply blue eyes, that I wound myself into a steel coil; then I let go and I'm flying still. Truly. (For which, perhaps, I owe her some thanks of one sort or another.) One night in the middle of a laugh I told her I was going to be a congressman, a senator, maybe a president. That meant noise, bands, microphones, speeches over the little gate at the rear of a train like the kind I'd seen as a kid on the Santa Fe tracks, and easy lies that sounded like careful calculations. I knew I was good at those—the whole elaborate pitch was a dazzler in the tradition of the campaign promise. I'm not sure I know more now what it does mean than I thought that night, pulling it like a lightning bug out of the dark air.

But she listened. Her whole sorority liked the idea. "*National politics?*" "Well, why not? Far as he can *go*. I guess." Like a trip, all you do is buy a ticket and be there on time. What happens to you along the way no one can promise. It was better than being quarterback on the Aggies with no prospects, like her previous boyfriend. Who was my last competition: a fist, naked (as she never saw him, since everybody's grappling in those days took place in furtive corners of the Alpha Mu house) he must have had padding sewed under his skin. His head was a mess of cuts and numbers, still (permanently) pre-literate. What if I had lost out to him?

I took her along. She had a bag of southern girl's stuff. (If we ever went to court on it, which of us could prove entrapment?) Fancy Samsonite luggage: words in it that broke their vowels in two, but with no violence. A strange language to use for a weapon, it had no points, more a kind of sucking action that pulled you into a windy hollow. Breasts in it, with nipples that bit back. Leg-spread that could snap closed and take a fellow's hand off, never mind what-all else, if she didn't have a mind to. In the bag—dresses that needed replacing whenever the air so much as hit them. A shovel to dig up every word or act you thought well buried. Bleach, kerosene, cleaning fluid: each used (only once, and not used exactly—selected for display), poured with a shaking hand into one of the goblets her grandma left us. "You Joe, you're pouring this down my throat!" when all the time she's bloody well doing the pouring but tempting me, tempting me . . . Goddamn! A life of high comedy. I wish I could be abject enough to aspire

to all that again. I try to remember what it was like and it all runs together: did I dare consider running for senior class treasurer, did I dare dream of Mary Margaret? Such pure joy, such pure terror.

I'll tell you when our first son was conceived. When the votes were in from the last decisive northeast county (and I was smashed. She was never smashed.) Mary Margaret whispered in my ear so my campaign staff wouldn't hear, and led the new state attorney general to her scented bed to see if it was different with an elected official. (It hadn't, you see, been so good with an appointed one. Let me not begrudge her the truth, however; it did get better.) By the time I made it to a national office, yes indeed, the girl had worked up some good limber exercises to demonstrate her pleasure. Ambition for ambition. If ever I declare for the presidency and am found dead in my bed in the morning, you can tell the coroner it was her gratitude that did it.

Which means what? Let someone else tell you what you need to know about your husband? Good God, what if their opinion really hinged on politics? If issues of tax structure, farm subsidies, SEATO, determined my election, what could she take for her cues? My real nature speaks a foreign language and her own emotions speak none at all. Then again, she and the electorate cannot ever fail each other in this life: both love something beside the point, that lives in newspapers and spot ads in election years, in gossip columns and gala state occasions. I'm not there when they look at me and they elect each other.

So it's a sort of psychic gang-bang for my lady Mary Mag—like fucking every voter in the state. My beloved wife, whose chastity when she brought it to me had been guarded in a gargoyle crouch by a many-brothered family of crack shots, a phony churchman of a father, sorority sisters with scissors between their teeth, and her own melting-eyed, strawberry-tongued, utterly icy control of her destiny—was she feeling a sexual tremor every time Luke Thompson or Willie Mae Johnson X'd their ballot or threw that red lever back to get out of the voter's booth? Her quaint wordy husband was putting it, putting something, on the line, but decently. They were saying "Yes, yes" out there in the sticks, and she throbbed with affirmation as if their approval had been an invitation to a trip to the bushes. What an orgy an election can be, if you're so inclined.

So you see, she *is* a devoted Senate wife. If she remains unconvinced about how worthy that dreamy Joey was without the crazy sword and buckler he concocted for her, she shared with him the hard-assed unrelenting side that made him this renowned and noble man you see before you today. Our public life, bless it, is every bit what it appears. Her most genuine smiles are For the Press, her concerns are duties shouldered graciously, the funds and charities and luncheons of dyed bread, inspired aspics in the shape of crippled children or recycled garbage. I can't ask what sort of life we'd have had if I hadn't taken that blind running jump onto this lurchy bandwagon: by definition, if she married me I would make it. It is her Empyrean, she furnished it herself, my eyrie in the Sam Rayburn office building. All it lacks is a beam of light emanating from some mysterious source to play gently on her picture, our sons' pictures, in full but somber color on my desk. It sounds like a Greek curse, an arrangement of the Fates, or maybe the Calvinist dream: not that I didn't have to work my ass off to get here, but she seems to have been waiting here all the time, expecting me.

Is that what is meant by standing behind a man? It is a fine old virtue, then, more ancient than those poison goblets of her grandma. You do know, sheltered ladies, what some mild men get from behind.

The irony, you understand, is my own response to my wife's to-do about who I am, or who she is. (You wives do seem to enjoy meeting her every bit as much as you do me, though you pretend to be thrilled by my teeth, my six-inch cuffs, my airblown hairset. Taking my measure by taking hers? Your screwing by conduction?) She demonstrates nothing but an indifferent breeding and all the perspective of a lifelong hysteric and secret camp-follower, but it's enough to put me in my place. A senator? A king? A damn fool elevated by vain ceremony to an exquisite subtle shame. I see her posturing in my name and ask, so that's what we look like from a distance? All the public irrelevancies magnified in her makeup mirror, the glossies and blow-ups to improve on my face, and the shopping bags bearing my name into the supermarkets. What in the hell: then a senator is an expensive presence, a personage created, chiefly by mirrors, for scaring the crows of the other party.

From a flat corn-covered dusty yellow square of earth comes a

boy with a wife and her luggage. He holds the reins of a scrawny talent and she holds his two little balls in her lotioned hands. (Can this article have pertinent technicolor illustrations?) We are still riding, just so—you see, it has been nineteen years—and you must understand from that why Mrs. Senator Tender hasn't had a free hand for doing much more through the years. Beyond liberation, my good editors. We are both that, in our ways. We are that.

You may print this.

Inter-office

To: H.M.

From: Cathy Klein

Harriette, where to begin??! You (We?) have got a choice to make. This letter is symptomatic of what *Femme* should be dealing with. I know you don't approve of some of the things I'm into, along with a growing number of others around here. (Though, disapproval or no, I notice we're running a feature on "braless fashion" next month. Why don't we have a new department called CO-OPTATION?) In fact, I have to admit to myself in fairness that I don't know how you really feel about some of the implications of what the mag. does. There are people with real and serious cases of tunnel vision and then there are those who find that a good show of tunnel vision is an asset to their work. So I don't know. But whichever it is, you must stop and ask yourself: How do you feel letting the senator get his rocks off at the expense of women, in the name of his wife? It's all women, one way or another, that he's talking about. I.e., his own attitude that makes us exactly what we are and then gripes about it forever more. And with senatorial immunity. BMOC. I remember them. He knows he's got us, because to print this would be spitting into a high wind, and it's a safe guess that nobody in the *Femme* building would so endanger her makeup.

Here's the question in its most localized form: Do we print the routine advertisement for MY WIFE as Cook, Secretary and General Directress of Ass-Wiping Operations (not to mention Ass-Kissing, the chief means thereof) or do we really intend to anatomize the situation that makes wives like his, and absolute strangers like ourselves, the victims of such contempt.

What will the honesty cost us, Harriette? A little discomfort with ourselves and our inconsistencies? I know, when it comes to this kind of thing you have all the same domino theory terrors of (pardon me) a segregationist: If they all sit in the same kindergarten class my grandchildren will have nappy hair. Only you say, if we try to tell the truth about wo/men, our grandchildren will be born

from the mouths of test-tubes. Well, you don't like my language either but even you were thinking BULLSHIT when you read that man's diatribe.

If you can admit that, then you are on your way to re-thinking the whole "Beyond Liberation" issue. (I will leave your life out of this.) Let's for once take ourselves seriously as a magazine created by real people, not artifacts, for the women whose 75¢ we pocket, or who read us in 120° heat under the everlasting dryer they're spending their best years sitting under. Let us expose men like Joseph Tender and give their wives fresh ideals to pursue by *themselves*. Let us move toward new ends.

Or shall we hang a collar around the long curvy neck of our January cover girl that says what, who was it, Pope? (see, my English major wasn't wasted) suggested for the king's dog?

I am my master's dog, at Kew.

Pray tell me, m'am, whose dog are you?

Cathy

FROM THE DESK OF:

Cathy. We all have problems reconciling ourselves to our images. Have you asked yourself recently why you go on working for *Femme*? I am, we are dedicated—unfashionable as it is becoming—to making girls into women and making women more desirable, yes, to our men and not ashamed of it. If that aim is so insidious, why do you continue your association w/ us? I hope there is more than a pay check involved here.

By the way, what specifically do you suggest abt. this Tender business? What "choice" are you referring to?

H.

To: H.M.

From: C.K.

This is only partly a question of images. But I'm not surprised at the way you put it, you are so dedicated to image, illusion, trick, impersonation.

I came to *Femme* after college because I thought it was a job I could use for serious ends. E.g., you publish good unfrivolous fiction. Now I have to ask why? For whom? The list does look good with those Nobel winners every couple of years, but what is it really for, Borges in the beauty parlor, Kawabata in the kitchen, Beckett in the bathroom? (Well, he'd be amused at that, actually.) And I thought you—I no longer say we—were serving a purpose assisting women in defining themselves, improving themselves. Well suh, we am the ladies' Booker T. We are helping them, by the thousands,

toward the *wrong* definition of themselves and what we call improvement just digs a deeper grave for their best possibilities.

Now, Harriette, if you must know, I stay on here: (1) for the paycheck, which is at least—I'll grant this—the equivalent of a man's salary on a male-dominated staff. (2) because I can try to work from within. Just as I believe men can do more in the army than in jail as draft resisters. That's really how I see *Femme*, as a kind of women's army barracks where we shine up the equivalent of our belt buckles, learn to use a great array of light and heavy weapons against both enemies, ourselves and "our men," and generally protect the status quo as if it were a country. Decayed though it may be. And I will stay here until I am asked to leave. Maybe, in fact, since you continue to tolerate my vision of things, I'm not doing a very good job. . . .

Harriette, bas, although you have never allowed your age to be so much as guessed at in public, I am twenty years younger than you are. I don't say that to be bitchy. I mean first that you have a hell of a lot you can teach me. If you could ever admit to the things you've witnessed in your twenty-five years here climbing this greased totempole you could give a black-belt course in The Ultimate Feminism. Second, the twenty years between us make it impossible for me to share your theatrical view of femininity. You've devoted the best part of your working life to making these pages as slick and shiny as the nose you teach little girls to dread. The deepest dream your ideal reader indulges is to be stripped to the bone by a man made helpless by *Femme's* First Aid Beauty Tips, user-tested, utterly disapproved by Good Housekeeping. But can she, i.e., have you ever been *naked*? Or are you never ever seen out of your basic black? Your taupe-tone, your honeyglo, your silversheen? You see—twenty years between us means that you enjoy Broadway, literally I mean, you go to those over-ripe openings and to Sardi's afterwards, while I want the actors in front of me, maybe in my lap, so that everyone and no one makes the illusions. I want to go naked and sweat and not taste of raspberries until I'm reborn a raspberry. I want my mind as well as my body to be weight-bearing.

Cathy

FROM THE DESK OF:

Asses are weight-bearing too, my dear.

You may save the sociology. It is stale. Even the Sunday *Times* can make the distinctions you've found and lost again in your purple haze. (If Personnel had known you were capable of writing like that you would have been spared your present identity crisis, too busy clearing counters at Nedicks.) And lest you think my pique is a sign you've drawn blood, let me say that your polemics are not

challenging but irritating. You girls are forever harping and harri-daning and ignoring the business at hand, which makes you all too guilty of what you call "unfairly stereotyped feminine behavior." I can't accuse you of dereliction of duty but of slapdash work now that you're forever flying off to organize your little cadres in the lounge, and of having a generally demoralizing effect on a staff of women *who do not share your spleen*. Nor want to learn to. You may have your little victories when they're in line with our policies anyway—like the expansion of our Women in the Headlines into a monthly feature—fine—but do not presume to teach us to despise ourselves.

You are right when you say I have a lot to share with you, and if you ever had the openness to hear it, you might learn that life lived under a bare bulb, on a dirty narrow mattress on the floor, no raspberries in sight, is a sin against both spirit and body. I am on somewhat better terms with both—my age notwithstanding—than you might guess.

Cathy, your party-line devotion is doing a disservice to your talents. Isn't that an irony you girls could deal with at your next consciousness meeting or whatever you call them? How a talented and competent junior editor can destroy her powers of observation and analysis by selling herself to this year's—oh yes, my love—fashion. Ideas may not be born on Seventh Avenue, but they might as well be, the way they come and go. If you want women's minds maligned, indulge your irrationalities this way and men will be only too happy to call you all the names you hate. As for Sisterhood, how could anything as contemptuous as your note invite confidences from anyone who lives and likes a way of life blessedly different from yours?

Incidentally, I would have to be led to Sardi's on a leash, if anyone were mad enough to think I had any business there. Apparently such petty distinctions are beneath you. But at least you owe it to yourself and your little counter-insurgency—your boutique guerillas—to reconnoitre accurately. The enemy, apparently, is all around you. You had better know where and why, uptown or downtown, eastside or westside, if you're going to subvert us.

About the Tender letter, you were saying. . . . ?

H.

Inter-office
To: H.M.
From: C.K.

I do not sleep on a bare mattress on the floor. Is that all you can say? That is so *cheap* of you.

May I go to Washington to interview her. Try to find out what she's really like. Please.

FROM THE DESK OF:

Not on our money you can't. I am not as interested in this woman as you are, be she maligned or otherwise. You are assuming, of course, that she is very different from the Senator's characterization and that this would be evident to your oh-so-naked eye. Or perhaps she is kept at home in chains and you could free her. But then I would have to buy *your* distortions in setting the record straight. You may mutiny to your heart's content, but don't beg for the help of this captain.

H.

Inter-office

To: H.M.

From: C.K.

I am writing to her, more or less our standard pre-interview questionnaire. OK? Relax, the response will probably be very dull.

FROM THE DESK OF:

Anything you wish, since this is your baby. Just, please, don't involve the name of this magazine in any unseemly questions about the gentleman's selfishness in bed. You would like to discover that she bears whip marks on her shoulders, but I doubt you will. (And you needn't worry, I am nothing if not relaxed about the outcome.)

Still awaiting completion of two overdue features from you. What about "The Hamptons in Winter" and the (January) Fireside Booklist? When will I have them?

H.

Inter-Office

To: H.M.

From: C.K.

Do you enjoy sounding like the mother of us all? ("Don't talk to me now about where it hurts, I have to wash the kitchen floor.")

FROM THE DESK OF:

Cathy. Please. Desist. It takes a child to make a woman a mother. Now let this be the end of it.

H.

Dear Cathy Klein:

How nice of you to suggest an interview. Thanks. But it seems unnecessary to me. Perhaps you can understand: this particular lionized Wife is just a little tired of having the whip cracked over

her head when she doesn't even have the privilege of being the lion. I have been giving some thought to it recently: did you ever wonder what it feels like to be the moon—stone-cold except for the light it reflects because it happens to lie in light's path? If you follow.

Yours,
(Mrs.) Mary Margaret Tender

Dear Miss Klein:

You ask if I will elucidate. Why not. You've sent a sweet little list of sample questions (at least that's what I take it to be?). I'll answer that much and add a few of my own, and then I'll send you something I'm working on; writing, that is. If you like that you may use it for your magazine. Make it, say, an anonymous air mail letter from the moon. I'm not ready yet for stage center in my real name.

—What I have always wanted to be. Besides who I am, you mean. A football wife, a knight's wife, a movie actress (pardon, film star for your columns), the president's wife. Finally I'm beginning to think, a wife in plastic curlers and a pink orlon sweater cheating on her diet, putting a dime in the coke machine near the A & P checkout counter. Now, after all those years of fruitless dreaming, I might even like to try being a husband for a change. (Being alone, of course, is beside the point: No contest. Running unopposed in the third district. You can expect to learn nothing useful that way, except emotional sloth, which is not useful.)

—Childhood influences. Dear me, this is one that needs a Buckley or someone with that kind of gemmy heirloom of a family to answer it. One thing, though, that is worth noting if only because I haven't quite figured out yet what to do with it myself. A live charge.

My father was a minister. This meant nothing in actual terms—we were no more moral or genuinely God-fearing than your garden variety southern family, squabbling endlessly as chickens in our raucous drawls. But since my daddy was a minister of the First Methodist-Accommodationist Church (or so I called it) there was a lot of obligatory frowning on just about everything we did. Few outright prohibitions: I could go to dances and wear lipstick, but there was an edgy sense that a lot of things were right on the borderline of immorality. But he was not a particularly authori-

tative man. We were suburban rather than plantation Southern, you see, with a kind of shoddy genealogy, which matters to Southerners almost as much as it does to the British (maybe more). Half the families in the county claim they're out on a distant twig of Charlemagne's family tree, but we couldn't quite pull it off. This may have something to do with my father's slackness; if his want of a pedigree didn't explain anything, it did present a ready enough excuse. "You either learn at home or you never learn," he would tell us when we were recalcitrant. Rather unhopeful of redemption for a man of his calling. When I was very young I remember seeing, I think it was in a doctor's office, a matched set of those huge dark portraits hanging, slightly tipped forward, from the upper molding. After that, whenever my father tried to beleaguer us into doing or not doing something, I could see what he was up to. He was impersonating one of those stern ancestors he too had never had. He would stiffen and use his Sunday voice on us, propping himself, inside, against a dark background that implied velvet and heavy wood and unquestioned absolutes.

But he had to stoop pretty low for his results. He offered my brothers a hundred dollars each if they reached their twenty-first birthdays never having succumbed to the evils of smoking, drinking or fornication, nor having joined a secret society. That he forked over to both of them, crisp new bills, I realized only later was not a tribute to the truth, nor to his trust in their honorable representation of themselves, but to the fact that he had painted himself into a corner. A minister could hardly trumpet forth across the land the joint realities that he had made an inane commitment, and/or that his sons had failed to honor it.

When I told him I was marrying a (would-be) politician, I was made, by the expression on his mouth, to feel as though I had broken one of the easier of the ten commandments. Furthermore, the wd.-be politician came from a dirt farm in a town called Marigold—no oil to be seen up there—which was of about the same magnitude and finality as introducing a darker shade of skin to the family gene pool. He is over that now, of course, utterly. He has become a professional father-in-law. That keeps him busier than being an alumnus ever could, borrowing quarters out of the collection box to send to us in campaign years.

I recall the presence of my father, clothed in black but bearing none of the black smell of brimstone in the folds of his suit, to ask myself if my own very different obeisances to the look of things, the hang, the drape, of appearances might have begun there.

It might not have. ("You either learn at home or you don't learn." That echoes, disappears into its own sententiousness, then echoes.)

If you wonder at the absence of my mother from this brief report, you may be on to something, too. Perhaps as a girl she envisioned herself a minister's wife.

—How I keep busy (and off the streets). Well. I would like to have been a writer, at least a real Lois Lane, girl-reporter. (Note reference: Who is L.L. without Clark Kent/Superman? I give myself away at every turn.) But I was too easily persuaded that my bust was the bust of a natural-born Homecoming Queen. And so, being the dutiful daughter that I was when the occasion suited, I took those measurements and this face (that face—I'm afraid they're no long quite identical) as a judgement and a path and told myself that professional sorority sisters, even if they get A's in cow college frosh comp, are made for handling, for turning this way and that so they can be seen even unto the last row of the stadium. And not for much else. This, of course, seemed a more than adequate fate as far as my father was concerned. He may have been a man of the cloth but he never missed a football game. Therefore it was only consistent that he honored as well that tradition that respects and reproduces the woman whose brains have all gone to her tits.

I tended to talk back, however, to certain of the young men who fingered the goods too avidly and so Mary Margaret Armstrong was not infrequently called Strong Arm. That was an easy trick—pictures of Indian arm-wrestlers flashed on and off in my defenseless head and there I was with my sleeves rolled up over muscles, trying to flatten some Kappa Phi's wrist to the table. But I persevered; I walked like so many of the girls you see in the deep South, knees padlocked and the key mislaid.

I write about college because nothing has happened to me since then. My last year in school I met Joe Tender, put on a few Southern airs (you can imagine!) that didn't work this one time,

subdued my strong arm, or had it subdued forcibly by a certain innocent tenaciousness that I persuaded myself grew, like the sweetest corn, only in the country. Married him and graduated from cheerleader servicing the vagrant needs of crewcut linebackers to private groupie for a Public Man.

—What do I think about Washington. Do I like it.

This is a very strange place, you know, and this is our twelfth year here. It is a deep crevice between the public and the private where a great many bright and skillful people live wedged together hand to ass and ass to mouth. There are too many temptations—to action, to inaction, mostly to seduction by television lights and 8 point type. I see it as a place where a man or woman can get any kind of contact lenses, to look better at diplomatic clambakes: blue, green, brown, hazel, mirror. Half the town is in mirrors this year, you ought to do a story on it. You can knock over your best friend and not say hello if your eyes are coated with quicksilver.

In this crevice, from which I'm writing you, I should add, live a great many uninvited types not known for their ability to get invited anywhere. Migrant farm children, Vietnamese grandmas with their ears shot off, South Bronx junkies with perforated arms ready to be torn off on the dotted line and mailed to their congressman. I am sentimental, I have been told, a real goddamn bleeding heart who lacks respect for problem solving and phasing into, over and out, who is in short a woman (bleeding everywhere) in the men's washroom. The men's graveyard. I try to let it be.

Parties here are parties everywhere and they are just like our lives: Between the men and the women drifts a kind of scrim, a curtain made of printed forms (IRB 322 Short Form D), luncheon programs, committee agendas, the scrawled messages of legislative assistants, and it is all held together with a neat glue, compliments of the ladies, made of contraceptive foam laced with equal parts of Ma Griffe, Palmolive Dishwashing Liquid, and fine Jamaican Rum. This is what we go out to have an evening of, and come home to when we're finished. Our homes are on the annual Georgetown house tour, our heads hang from the Christmas tree in season, we thank our constituents for remembering our birthdays, we visit orphanages, stepping through their cinder block halls like minor goddesses bestowing our presence like a

box of chocolates. We spend what passion is left making small dolls and fashioning cunning silver pins to stick in them according to our husbands' or the majority whip's or the straw poll's specifications. Our thoughtful husbands bring home the print-out from election-time computers and we make clothes out of it, we cut strips and braid them into rugs, and once in a while around late October, those of us who don't employ cooks boil it up and slather it with spaghetti sauce or maybe a nice remoulade. Then if we have to eat it on election day, we'll know what to expect. When we fill out forms, where there is a blank next to "religious preference" we write—candid before our God—"Influence."

—How do I feel about "the new feminism"? I am not entitled to a vote, being one of the victims it has come too late to save. I understand it with my heartbeat. I send up bubbles of assent from my hollow stem that burst when they hit the surface.

Now I get to ask my own questions.

—What is the myth you've found most dangerous (since your Baptism)?

The idea that a little arsenic every day makes you immune to large doses. Also that you marry what you need.

—What is the myth you've found most useful?

That a woman's little noises of duty and devotion, forthcoming at strategic and expected times, betoken satisfaction. Men are easily assured on this score. The more indifferent the more readily assured.

—What is the rock upon which the nation's capital was builded? Cheaters never prosper.

—Why don't you change your life?

I have joined forces with the sharkskin and silk shoulders of the nation to keep power out of little hands (my own foremost and representative). I shill for the carnival owners. If you can't beat 'em, you're lucky if they'll let you come along for the ride. I am speaking next week at a high school graduation in Maryland on the topic of Law and the Younger Generation. I will not, if I am sober, tell them that from the evidence a distressingly large sample of cheaters appear to be prospering. I am always sober. And I don't know why I am going to find myself behind that microphone lying to children except that my husband regretfully

declined, and turned to me smiling: Here, this is for you. Let's pretend we speak a common tongue; then you say these words for me.

—What is there about your husband that keeps you?

A vivid tongue

An extra ball

Candor

Strong hands

Good arches

A calm that surpasseth any intrusion

A comprehension of seven different influences on the GNP
Fidelity. If not to me, then to what he takes to be me. A long shadow, good to walk in: like a slicker in the rain when it's really coming down.

His wife's matched set of perversions (with bone handles, to be carried anywhere, on planes, in taxis): tongue lashing and interior flagellation. If he will commit these atrocities upon her, or assist her in committing them upon herself, she will bare her wolfish teeth which, reciprocally, moves him. She sucks blood from his neck and attacks him with her nail file but he is victorious. His cloak of self-regard, all self-woven, spun of the thread of congressional immunity and contempt for all noncoms on deck, keeps him safe. Were it not for him, he reminds her. She shields her teeth. Were it not for him.

Here is the first graffito I will be guilty of one day. It will be the handwriting on the wall of, say, the ladies lounge in the Capitol building. The man who first wrote it resided (as we say in polite society) for many years in D.C. himself, behind the very real bars of St. Elizabeth's (as we say in impolite society) Asylum.

I will write it just above

PLEASE DEPOSIT SANITARY NAPKINS IN RECEPTACLE

A slave is one who waits for someone else to free him.

Inter-office

To: H.M.

From: C.K.

Just received enclosed, to which Mrs. Tender alluded early in her second letter.

We are, even the most sensitive of us, caught in a riptide of habit and smallness that keeps our eyes off the real pain of the truth: that we live in caves.

If you answer this with a "distinction" between kinds of caves, Harriette, I am packing up my desk and turning in my gold key to the john. Does anything get through your firmed, smoothed, rose-water-sweetened, smoked, horned, thorny skin?

I wish you openness to outrage and I don't give up hope.

Your sister,
Cathy

Untitled piece by M. M. Tender, rec'd 7/9 (acknowledged 7/13)

I have left him, finally I have left him. I am standing on a rock looking out to sea and the sea is purple: red blood and blue water make purple, that is elementary. I knew it in the second grade. There isn't much I know these days that I didn't know in the second grade but there are a lot of things I don't know any more.

One of them is how to talk to people like him, how to get my mouth right up close next to the horned armadillo scales that guard the ear and talk into it without getting scratched like the rabbit in the briar patch. He is somewhere else all the time, doing the things I went away with him because he could do. When he comes back at night or on Sunday or on the 31st of a long month, he is too tired to tell me. Anything at all. He is like the wives who turn over (and the springs throb wearily like bells) who say, apologetic because duty insists they be humble, "I'm sorry darling, you can't imagine what a hard day it's been." Kind men pretend they don't know the best balm for a hard day. As kind women try not to remember how talk is the place where everything without words begins. No, they can't imagine how hard a day.

I have left him. I turn away slowly from the empty horizon and there is the most astonishing man I have ever seen, staring back at me. He is bearded, all in red, with yellow patches on his coat in wild designs. He is wearing a top hat and when he takes it off his head a bouquet of violets falls out of it and he hands it to me with a flourish. He is a magician and I go with him falling on the rocks. Scrambling, my knees are bloodied, but I will not complain or he may leave me there.

My new life begins. In a short fluffy skirt I stand at his side and I am privy to all the secrets of his magic. I hand him everything he

needs: the eggs, the scarves, the scissors, the bananas. He pulls daffodils from my nose and pennies from my ears. Once he pushed at my navel where it peeked out above the tiny skirt; he rang it like a doorchime and when he opened his hand he had gathered two tangerines and a purie marble. The marble was like a clear sky, as cloudless as my joy, and I carried it with me for luck until I lost it. In the spotlights I help him with everything he does and the audience cheers for us both. And in the dark, far from the crowd, he touches my breasts and they turn to buds and then they flower for him. Where I was once a cactus he turns me to a desert spring.

There is only one job I don't like to do but I submit because I love him. In this trick I must lie down in a clever box with special compartments and let him take a saw to me—at least the audience thinks that. I do lie in it but I hold my breath and listen to the even in-out of the saw as if it were his own breath answering mine. Of course his saw, the blunt-edged prop, never comes near me. I lie curled like a silk-worm behind my special shield, spinning songs in an in-out rhythm.

One day I am almost asleep in my secret half of the box. The saw is breathing steadily and the audience is hushed with fear. I feel a pin-prick in my side and then a real, prodding pain. He is sawing me in half. There is no hidden compartment. I begin to scream. My own real blood is welling under me and the saw is hot as a torch as it slices neatly toward the bone. Frail smoke is rising from my ragged skin. Just before the darkness slams down on me like a coffin lid I see him lunge at my side with his finger pointing. Then he reaches into the wound that is flaming with my blood and pulls from it a giant red scarf. It is long and longer and longer, endless, I am unravelling, I am a single silken thread, and he is waving it above his head. The audience whistles through its teeth for more.

RICHMOND LATTIMORE

Les Folies Françaises, ou les Dominos

—de François Couperin

Voici
quelques folies,
dit-on, de France.
Je t'en fais don.
Il y a peut-être quelque signification?
Non.

La Virginité (sous le domino couleur d'invisible)

What color is no
color? I wear
no experience
nor mask of sense .
but go
(this will pass)
bare
behind a costume of glass.

La Pudeur (sous le domino couleur de rose)

Cover the shape of the eyes
with pink
and shrink .
from what I dare not realize

L'Ardeur (sous le domino incarnat)

Reddish
is the color now
as of flesh
or blood
in heart and head
that makes the warm
storm
of ardor glow.

L'Espérance (sous le domino vert)

It has not been given.
Wait
for wanted heaven.
Never too late
for what has never been.
I'll wait
in hope forever green.

La Fidélité (sous le domino bleu)

Even past
hope gone away
and lost
I, in blue,
will stay
forever true.

La Persévérance (sous le domino gris de lin)

Persistently
now in gray
I'll stay
and be
forever near
nor ever go away.

La Langueur (sous le domino violet)

Success
gluts. Failure dis-
heartens. Give
up all this
effort toward
life and live
none the less
bored.

La Coquèterie (sous différens dominos)

Such confections
as are these
turn their perfections
dressed to please
in all directions.

*Les Vieux Galans et les Trésorières suranées (sous des dominos
pourpres et feuilles mortes)*

Old stuff,
purple and dead-leaf-
colored, fluff
and wire,
we know
the moves. Pity that application
fails. By so
much (time, subtle thief!)
imagination
outstrips desire.

Les Coucous bénévoles (sous les dominos jaunes)

Shall we in yellow
(not red or black) rave
if others crave
those sweets we own?
Our fellow-
sufferers are not few
nor all unknown.
Cuckoo!

La Jalousie taciturne (sous le domino gris de mauve)

No. Mine.
You dare
not touch
or stare
at what's mine
too much.

Such
mauve mood consorts
with life
cut by the self-held knife
which hurts.

La Frénésie, ou le Désespoir (sous le domino noir)

Black
is the color. See
the wreck
of old
(once green) hope, and feed
on sallow, cold
bile. Hope gone
wear
across the bare
bone
black for despair.

L'Ame en peine

Sometimes such troubles, stir
ring my surface
as moods and confused colorings concur
to cloud the glass.

New Poem

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through the small but fierce
intervening flesh.

Off the bus

we walked on, and we wished.

Long almost silent walk
the always whoring or always virgin
sun

blazing blue, gold, orange as it dropped,
And the long, inarticulated wish
like a many-toned print or water color wash
yearning, anxious, strange—
the eternally ancient

(yet
in some sense young) hope for change.

II

Just as the light

began to be lost

we walked beside

a freshly growing field,
and then at once turned
together as we heard
a very gentle, shuffling sound
with

an unmistakeable feeling of breath.
A breathing.

Huge, dark figures were quiet-
ly moving

through a gate
and spreading themselves still and
great through the field.
Some of them bent

ghostly, beautiful, to brush along the ground
with their long, lean heads.
Some few stood alone quite

self-possessed
in the failing light
and others stretched

themselves to touch.

The gate closed
as the last colt

lurched
slightly drunk or mad or wild
through the soft, half-light.
Then the groups simply stopped
moving

and were caught
it seemed

in a steaming
or fogged, fleshed and powerful tableau
in the twilight's

thickly purpled glow.
The meadow

now
dark and filled

(I should
say the fulfilled

field)
blend-
ed itself with each of them
as we walked away

along the shadowy
disappearing fence

III

to our first house,
Home.

The honeymoon room.
Structure now gone—

with my records, an
un-
gainly four-legged phonograph
with doors, height

and all that
(a kind
of absurd shrine)

and my books:
 a second floor
 bay window
with a chair
 (from which the libido
 floats, looks);
heavy tapestried, linen
 curtain
 on
the wall behind
 a candled
 altar
for we were
 religious then.
And a bed.
 I took off my shoes
 and wiggled my toes
lying on the floor in that first room
excited by them
 (toes I mean)
 and fascinated,
flabbergasted
 by you—warmed
together by the presents of our friends
 around us
 in our new house.
Shy we
 undressed separately
you in our room
 I in the bath down
the hall. "My god,"
 I said
to myself
 (not quite pajama clad),
"This is exciting as hell."
The knowledge that my hardon
 would soon
have another use
 than in the past

made
me paradoxically calm. And glad.

IV

I must tell something more
of her.
For she gave up much to be with me:
School (She was a junior
when I met her),
brief affair with another lover. Family.
Her
brown hair
is long as I have said,
and that yellow dress she made
herself; besides she was very good
at seeing what is real and necessary—
a kind of
anguished god-
ess at managing money.
She
had the nearly haughty
look and bearing of aristocracy.
To tell the truth her
hauteur
half-turned
me on.
Invited to the Caribbean
by her father
in the summer
she chose my own
less colorful, slowly drain-
ing Ocean.
The profile line
of her neck and face
had a Pollaiuolo portrait's grace.
And the aura of her presence and her talk
brought meaning, memory and hope
back.

V

I was a virgin

when

we went to bed.

(Not that this

is

so unique or sacred.)

All of us were virgin once.

And many spend years along the fence.

Oh, I know words cannot catch
much

of the experience of sex.

On the other hand

painting, sculpture and music can—

the first two because we see or even

feel the textured flesh through them;

music because music's sound

like time

moves behind, together with, or runs ahead
of spirit and mind.

It was the tenderness of meeting

that surprised me. Going

from my known man's land

into the flowering country of woman.

Part of myself moving inside you gent-

ly or thrusting, kicking like an unborn child

in its development

Or like a live fish of silver or gold

now darting, now suspended quietly,

in your rich, profound, uncharted sea.

And you—you danced with me,

sometimes led

sometimes followed.

I knew what loving meant

and for the first

time pointed myself toward your woman's heart—

tried to touch it with my groping, masculine hand,

as I felt you grip

RICHARD PEVEAR

The Beautiful Acceptance

Glory to those who are not afraid of disaster,
Who at the uncertain moment will place all they have won
In hazard, aware that the odds are only human
Despite successes

And that, as Mallarmé said, one throw of the dice
Will not abolish chance. Pyrrhus, when he saw
The street grow narrow behind him, the gateway blocked,
Fresh reinforcements

Struggling in to help him when he wanted
To retreat, the alien city alarmed,
Attacking from every direction, his own men
Wounding each other—

A nightmare worse than his worst dreams—
Did not look around for a bargaining position,
For the necessary betrayal, for a quick abdication.
Knowing nothing

Of the enormous veneration of life and property,
Considering the fall of cities and kings
Glorious, he took off his crown and rode out
Into the enemy.

The beautiful acceptance of the unavoidable,
When history takes on flesh and becomes an ambush:
To give off life as fire gives off light,
Consumed at the limits.

Asking for nothing but by a bitter insistence
To overcome shame with straightness of heart, refusing
All consolations. The world at any moment
May become translucent.

Summer Storm

The wind blows heavily, the trees all together
Bend and sway like mourning women.
The maples show the white undersides of
Their leaves—it will rain.

Dark clouds drive over, the sky breaks open,
The dust is hammered black, the flowers
Snap from their long stems, the trees wail
And shed their leaves.

You might have grown utterly silent, withdrawn
From the world's illusion, as the world
Withholds itself, body and color, through the long
Droughts of summer.

You might have moved into perfect concealment,
Turned inward, gesture of refusal,
Sipping from a hidden spring, your own darkness,
Poisonous water

The rain beats everything down. I imagine
It blew like this on Golgotha the day
Before black saturday, or is that an image
Out of early painting?

The bent figures huddled together, the wind,
The beaten soil. Let it happen.
The storm is truer than your private, plaintive,
Dissevering sorrow.

The trees shed dust, shed leaves, shed hiding.
More is going on, as usual, than you know.
They sway distinctly against the on-driven
Encompassing sky.

Wild Asters

Now come the asters, purple, unclenching like fists.
The fall rains bring them on, there is something about them
Of springlike, sudden and awkward. Asters resist
The early frosts, the fields would be desolate without them

And we be resigned to winter, having no choice.
In the sun they turn white and look like first snow
Or a white animal half gone out of sight. Giving voice
To the turning weather, the geese fly south. Asters don't know

Or are not afraid that time has turned against
Their naïve love, lays waste, that down the skies
The sun slants more and more away, moment by moment
Light lessens, things die, the asters stand staring like eyes.

Summer and the Sorgue

—for René Char

In the Sorgue up to his waist, at the parting of the waters,
A man with a long peeled pole with a scythe blade at the end
Dips sideways in the water cutting loose from the bottom
The long water grass. On the bank
There are two young men, a woman asleep at a table,
Three empty benches, and you and I.
There is a water wheel fixed to the stone wall at our left
Uselessly turning its heavy moss-covered paddles
And three clean replacements. In the water
The grass-cutter cuts long swaths of bright green grass
And lets them drift off downstream slowly with the current.
It's the time of vacations. The sun alone takes up
Its heavy labor in the fields, which may seem
Miraculous, uncalled-for, but we are the more deceived.

For a Political Prisoner

Lord, if energy is eternal delight,
What of the millions of the dead who have gone down
Empty into death like husks of seeds?
High up the sun burns over the fields, it
Sees nothing and is perfectly just,
And whoever walks in the spell of its light
Between the earth and the sky is a man by all laws.
Lord, I put down these words to recall
Those gone under, helpless to save
The flame of their lives, and to speak of a prisoner
Locked at the bars of his narrow window
All night watching for the features of your love
Across the dark hold of space we think we are conquering.

Energy

As though the center of the sun were everywhere
An instant unfolding, in the sudden light
There is a great deal of movement
Which looks like

Men in bronze armor marching on a city, like
Women in chains, like walls building up
And an explosion, and people
Searching in the ruins.

The signal fires meaning Troy has fallen
Sow their salt ashes in the mouths of the dead.
At the heart of numberless embraces
It is already cooler.

For the Dark Crossing

These are words without a fable, without music,
Awkward when they try to speak of love, which is seldom,
Bitter when they point a finger at some injustice,
Half-aware of the unthreaded labyrinth of action.
A wooden facsimile of the perfect language
Heard for a moment and lost, vainly sought for,
Although it sings calmly in the air, the earth, the water.
These are words that would clothe the simplest object
In its own simplicity, but twisted from their purpose,
They burn on your tongue like an acid penny.
Words which, yet, if you face them squarely,
Yield a hard light and, being inadequate,
Leave space enough for the world to flow into.

The Other

Quiet night. Rain falls through the leaves like birdshot.
The woods drink up shower after shower, drink up
The showers and the silence between showers. I imagine
Nothing is left.

Sleep, dream, however far it takes you
From the one who lies here.
Simply the whisper of your breath sustains me.

STEPHEN FARBER

Non-Talking Pictures

FILM CRITICS LIKE TO PRATTLE about non-linear films and the visual sophistication of audiences in the Electronic Age, but they still resist genuinely experimental work. In many quarters Nicolas Roeg's superb film *Walkabout* has been dismissed as a children's movie or attacked as a mindless, sentimental celebration of Rousseau's Noble Savage. It is always depressing to see good work undervalued, but *Walkabout* has luckily managed to find a small, devoted audience that should keep it alive until it is "discovered" by film historians. With only two films to his credit, I think Roeg has already established himself as one of the most important directors of our time—one of the pioneer architects of a new cinematic language that may help to make the future intelligible.

Walkabout's basic story is simple enough; it is a fable drawing on *Hansel and Gretl* and *Robinson Crusoe*. A harried urban bureaucrat takes his two children (a teenage girl and a six-year-old boy) into the Australian desert, then after trying to kill them, shoots himself and sets fire to his car. Days later, close to death, the boy and girl meet a teenage aborigine boy on his "walkabout" (a test of survival that he must pass before he can claim the privileges and responsibilities of manhood in his tribe), who leads them back to civilization. But the story is only the skeleton; the film's strength is in the wealth of visual details, the rare depth of feeling that make it a great romantic lament for a pure but dying land. If you still go to movies for messages, as most of our critics do, you could probably reduce Edward Bond's screenplay to no more than a tract on the benevolence of nature and the virulence of civilization. One might say that Roeg's original cinematic style gives *Walkabout* its texture and complexity, if that didn't suggest that style and content are somehow at odds, when in fact they are in perfect harmony. This movie is visually seductive, but it is *not* a "visual trip" to which you surrender your intelligence in order to let the pictures "wash over you." In Roeg's films the imagery can be *analyzed* with the same rigor one would bring to the language of a poem or novel.

Still, part of the special pleasure of movies is that they can transport us to exotic worlds, and *Walkabout* absorbs us in one of the starkest, most savage, and yet most magnificent landscapes ever captured on film. Roeg's last film, *Performance* (which he co-directed with Donald Cammell)—a sophisticated, graphic vision of the contemporary drug culture and the extremes of the sexual revolution—probably seems as different from *Walkabout* as a film could possibly

be. But both works reveal Roeg's gift—the gift of a natural born film-maker—for bringing strange places alive on celluloid. The barren Australian outback, like Mick Jagger's cluttered bohemian mansion in *Performance*, is much more than background to the story; it becomes an incredibly vivid, almost tactile presence. Like the conventional characters in the films—the middle-class gangster in *Performance*, the city children in *Walkabout*—we lose our bearings in these exotic, hallucinatory worlds we never knew existed. Perhaps, like the characters, we even find our secure sense of identity slipping away from us. Disorientation can sometimes be the first step toward liberation.

The wilderness that Roeg's camera explores in *Walkabout* is a land of startling changes—the bright orange sands, the mountains of rock, an unexpected oasis of grass and stream, a swamp filled with dead trees, it all might be the terrain of another planet. The film's spectral images awaken us to the *mystery* that the earth contains. This land is too marvelous to be simply beautiful; the film is no idealized portrait of nature as pastoral haven. Roeg persistently calls our attention to the cruelty of nature—closeups of one lizard devouring another, maggots teeming over the decaying corpse of a giant beast. When we first see the aborigine boy, flies are circling his face and rotting dead lizards hang from his waist. One of the most exquisite scenes in the film is of the girl swimming nude in a quiet, sheltered lagoon—a moment of complete tranquillity and harmony with nature; yet Roeg will not quite allow us the luxury of savoring this ecstatic moment. He interrupts the idyll by intercutting images of the aborigine boy spearing fish, killing and disemboweling animals; the juxtapositions keep us on edge, remind us that primitive life includes both reverie and brutality.

If this harsh natural world nonetheless enchants us, that is because we see it fresh, through the eyes of the six-year-old child; the camera allows us to share his sense of wonder. To him the journey through the wilderness is a magical experience. When he sees some camels, they are caught in a shaft of sunlight, fabulous, unearthly creatures, and he conjures up a half-remembered tale of adventure in distant and dangerous lands; a fleeting image of an explorer on a safari passes before his eyes. The young boy, as yet unfettered to the city, adjusts easily to life in the bush, and almost intuitively establishes communication—a kind of sign language—with the aborigine boy. His sister is more aloof. She is already a miniature colonialist, committed to her stifling, cultivated city life—even in the wilderness, she practices her breathing exercises and voice lessons from finishing school. She insists on staying in uniform—"We don't want people thinking we're a couple of tramps"—and she retains a vaguely patronizing attitude toward the aborigine. Yet the film never treats her as an easy satiric target; Roeg *understands* the dream of elegance

that draws her to traditional civilization. The lovely images of her walking under a makeshift parasol, her hair piled on top of her head, as if on her way to a nineteenth-century garden party, are affectionately mocking, not cruel or condescending. When they arrive at a deserted farmhouse close to the road that connects with the city, the girl is mesmerized by some old photographs and magazine clippings—pictures of dignified, aristocratic English faces—and, leafing through them, she suddenly begins to cry. As he stares at her, the aborigine intuitively understands the centuries that separate them, the cultural barriers that can never be broken down. Roeg underscores their isolation with an exaggerated overhead shot of the girl and boy passing each other awkwardly, careful not to touch; the girl is backing away from him now, and even in this small room, they seem worlds apart.

Only in the swimming scene does the girl seem completely free; she has momentarily accepted her place in nature, and in the tribal family that the aborigine images as eternal. And this is the moment that stays with her, the one memory that she embellishes in imagination afterwards. Roeg ends the film with a daring flash forward: Years after her adventure in the outback, the girl prepares dinner in her high-rise Sydney apartment; as she listens to her husband talk about promotions and raises, her eyes glaze over and she looks back to childhood. The final image is one we did not see earlier—an extension of the swimming scene, in which she and her brother and the aborigine, all nude, frolic together in Eden-like contentment. It seems sentimental for a moment, until you realize that the scene is fantasy, not memory—the girl's simplification and idealization of what actually happened. In dreaming of paradise lost, she forgets her own coolness and prudishness. What makes this conclusion unutterably moving is our realization that this marvelous, dramatic adventure barely touched her at the time, and becomes meaningful only in retrospect—when it is far too late for even the most extravagant romanticizing to rescue her from the forlorn, proportioned domestic nightmare that she has consciously chosen for herself.

People who go to movies for plot and character development may find *Walkabout* slow; it has lyric rather than dramatic intensity. The repeated closeups of bizarre insects and reptiles, the abstract montages of sun and moon and sand and rock are comparable to the refrains in a ballad or the repetition of themes in a musical work, building mood and atmosphere, contributing to the sense of a mythical journey through a primeval world unchanged since the Ice Age.

Throughout *Walkabout* imagery, sound and music complement each other to create a total sensuous experience still rare in films. When the boy and girl see an oasis in the desert, Stockhausen's "Hymnen" reinforces the exultation that they feel, and the camera focuses on lovely green birds and luscious red fruit in the tree that

offers them succor. That night as they sleep, the water and fruit dry up, and now the electronic music exaggerates the more threatening sounds of nature turned ravenous; the compositions, too, are more sinister—a serpent slithers across the tree, then the tree stands barren and gnarled against a black sky, and the children lie stretched out as if dead, the girl framed beneath a white shawl that might be a shroud.

Roeg also uses an original cinematic shorthand to establish dramatic motivation—but in a richer, more suggestive fashion than more conventional storytelling would allow. The film opens with a five-minute montage of city life, an overture completely without dialogue—images of the father and two children on a typical day, rapidly cut together to dissonant atonal music. Individual images—like a brief shot of the little boy in school uniform, waiting to cross a street, dwarfed by some sort of military parade—convey something of the regimentation of urban life, but the nervous rhythm of the cutting is an even more effective, indirect method of implying the tensions and anxieties that have finally unbalanced the father. It is not unlike the opening sections of *Performance*—the mosaic of gangster life in mod London, banal images juxtaposed to point up incongruities, with an undertone of hysteria that suddenly makes the familiar seem weird and ominous.

Roeg experiments with film structure; the film takes liberties with time and with conventional dramatic unities, creating counterpoint to enrich its themes. For example, a satiric sequence with some Italian meteorologists in the desert has no purpose in the story—the children never meet them; but it is included in order to contrast the unnatural, lecherous attitudes toward sex that are inculcated by society with the girl's unashamed, unselfconscious acceptance of her body as she swims in the lagoon. The counterpoint can express parallel as well as contrast: When the three children, in a moment of relaxation, climb a tree together, Roeg intercuts their horseplay with images of the aborigine tribe inspecting the burned wreck of the car where their father lies dead—two events taking place simultaneously. The intercutting suggests the relativity of cultural judgments—the white children respond to the mysteries of nature with the same reticent curiosity that the aborigines feel on exploring a bizarre relic of the urban world. But Roeg does not overstate the parallel. His acknowledgment of the superstitiousness of the natives keeps us from sentimentalizing the tree-climbing episode; for when the aborigines run in bewilderment and terror from the car radio—from modern technology, really—it seems a subtle foreshadowing of the parting of the children. This sequence also has a more immediate dramatic purpose: As he watches her climb the tree, the aborigine boy becomes conscious of the girl's body, and her gestures remind him of the naked native women he has known all his life; for the

first time, he sees her as a *woman*. The girl does not realize this at the moment, but that night, the aborigine stares at her fixedly, and she suddenly recalls the shape of the tree—in flashback Roeg's camera makes its sleek, smooth surfaces look astonishingly like the limbs of a woman's body—and becomes aware of his sexual interest in her. All of this—speculation on some of the paradoxes of primitive and civilized life, as well as pertinent dramatic detail—is communicated economically and subtly, within just a couple of minutes of screen time, and again, without a word of dialogue. At every turn *Walkabout* develops its ideas visually.

But beyond all this, what makes the film so compelling is that it is absolutely contemporary in theme—one of the first movies to reflect the growing sensitivity to physical environment, and the deep concern about the callous destruction of the earth. The most terrifying sequence is the sudden appearance of the game hunters who have come to slaughter some water buffalo. Roeg treats the unexpected, wanton violence as a cataclysmic violation of nature. With the arrival of the hunters, all the animals seem to take flight, and after the death of the buffalo, the camera travels over decomposing animal corpses, and finally over a desert of bones from which the aborigine boy rises, now dressed in tribal costume—a warrior summoning all the magic at his command to challenge this diabolical vision and defend his way of life.

In sequences like these *Walkabout* has apocalyptic power. It even seems vaguely futuristic; the transistor radio that the girl carries with her through the wilderness occasionally picks up weird, unsettling broadcasts about the end of the world. And when the children finally reach civilization, they find themselves in a ravaged, deserted mining camp—machines rusty and decayed, almost like the skeletons of animals in the desert—that seems a grim warning of what awaits us, a prophecy of the disintegration of our entire technological society.

But this prophecy contains a promise as well as a warning. The decay of civilization as we know it may be the only way to *restore* life. At times the film does contrast the purity of nature to the corruption of civilization, but an even more important motif concerns the continuities between primitive and modern technological life. The intercutting of the aborigine killing a kangaroo with a city butcher slicing meat makes this link obvious. Slightly less obvious is the charming sequence in which the little boy tells the aborigine an elaborate story while they walk through a kind of tropical rain forest; as the boy talks on and on, the passage of time is indicated by almost subliminal shots of leaves of old parchment turning. In some way that transcends language the two boys do understand each other. Storytelling is a ritual activity that binds modern man to his ancestors.

By underscoring these connections between urban and tribal man, the film wants us to recognize the sources of life, the endurance of a primitive spirit of rage and ecstasy that we may still be able to draw on in order to survive. In one sense *Walkabout* is a very pessimistic film, framed by two suicides—both the urban man and the natural man destroy themselves. And at the very end, the desolate expression in Jenny Agutter's eyes, as she looks back on the charmed life she has lost forever, is one of the most heartbreaking conclusions to any film in recent memory. Yet the film as a whole is curiously exhilarating, not depressing. Like *Performance*, *Walkabout* dares to question the deepest assumptions of Western civilization; it forces us to see the undercurrent of desperation and madness that mocks the pretense of a progressive, well-ordered society. But unlike more fashionably cynical films, these two movies try to discover alternatives—challenging, subversive new values that we can take seriously. *Performance* is deliberately perverse, while *Walkabout* is deceptively innocent, but both films could be called visionary; they try to show us the way forward.

This is not to say that *Walkabout* will send its audiences back to nature. Nor is it suggesting so simple a solution to the contamination of modern urban life. In spite of the hysterical, morally outraged reviews that *Performance* received, the film itself does not seem to have provoked widespread experimentation with drugs and bisexual promiscuity. Even the most revolutionary movies have a more subtle, indirect effect than the critics want to believe. By creating such a strong, vibrant, intoxicating—but unsentimental—vision of primitive life, *Walkabout* does make us dissatisfied with the limits we have set for ourselves, at least temporarily releases us from the constrictions and compromises we have come to take for granted. Most movies confirm what we already know, tell us what we want to hear, but *Walkabout* shatters complacency—it opens up possibilities again. That is probably the most we can ask of any work of art.

To many people Luchino Visconti's adaptation of *Death in Venice* would probably be associated with *Walkabout* as another example of a film conceived as a "visual experience." It is true that neither film has very much dialogue. But that is about all that they have in common. *Death in Venice* is "visual" in the very worst sense—stuffed with extravagantly pretty pictures that only obscure the themes of Thomas Mann's novella. This film does a disservice to cinema as well as to literature—its empty, self-consciously "beautiful" photography mocks the serious efforts of people like Roeg to find a way of communicating subtle and complex ideas through visual imagery.

Mann's novella, published in 1911, is probably one of the central works of twentieth-century literature, dealing, as it does, with sexual ambiguities, the moral failures of art, and some of the disturbing

tensions in the German temperament—extreme rigor and discipline contending with a strong, suppressed desire for sensual abandon. Very little of this is suggested in the film, which has become a monotonous, protracted study of a homosexual infatuation. Some of the critics have tried to say that Mann was not writing about homosexuality at all, which seems a rather naive and foolish argument; but by stripping away all the other dimensions, the film only highlights a slightly uncomfortable moralistic tone that was implicit in the story anyway—the idea that a homosexual crush is the most extreme form of decadence imaginable. The homosexuality is secondary to Mann; the important point is the erosion of Aschenbach's self-control, his more and more eager surrender to an all-consuming sensual intoxication. The film even loses the important reasons that Mann did have for giving the story a homosexual cast—that homosexuality has, associated with it, something of the thrill of breaking a tribal taboo, and that to a classical artist like Aschenbach an obsession with spiritual beauty is inevitably linked to the homoerotic ideals of Greek culture.

It is true that the film makes a feeble effort to raise some abstract questions about the artist's ambivalent relationship to physical beauty in a couple of flashback sequences in which Aschenbach conducts strenuous debates with an intellectual friend. These scenes are incredibly clumsy in themselves, with impossibly stilted dialogue ("Is beauty born of the spiritual, or does it pre-exist the presumption of the artist?"), and they are doubly embarrassing because they seem so arbitrarily imposed on the film. The content of these debates has no discernible relationship to anything dramatized in the rest of the film; the abstractions about spirit and senses, art and reality seem ludicrously irrelevant to all the elegantly dressed scenes in which Aschenbach and Tadzio exchange meaningful glances. Still, the fact that Visconti relies so heavily on those didactic flashbacks is revealing; he must have sensed that the images weren't carrying the meaning.

Most of the time the film follows the novella quite closely, yet just a few minor changes so confound the meaning of the story that it makes little sense even on the most literal level. Changing Aschenbach from a writer to a composer may not be a minor change, but it is a change I can understand (music can be integrated into a film more easily than literary excerpts), and it might have worked. Unfortunately, Visconti has heard the rumors that Mann based the character of Aschenbach on Mahler, and it is Mahler's music that floods the film's soundtrack. Aschenbach is supposed to be a classical artist, whose style is distinguished by "lofty purity, symmetry and simplicity"; over the years, we are told, it has grown increasingly rigid and formalized—it has become official state art. Even in the film, his friend attacks him as conservative, and accuses his music of being "stillborn."

But the accusations cannot possibly apply to Mahler's music, which is unmistakably warm, passionate, imaginative. In one scene of the film Aschenbach is inspired by a vision of Tadzio to begin composing at a feverish pitch, but is that meant to suggest that he is creatively liberated by this confrontation with physical beauty? The music hardly sounds constipated. With this confusion the story loses its focus, for it is impossible to understand the impact of this sensual temptation on Aschenbach's art without having a much more precise idea of what his art was like before he came to Venice. Also, if we are meant to feel that for the first time in his life, freed of conventional morality, Aschenbach yields to his senses and experiments with what is socially forbidden, then what is the purpose of the flashback in which he visits a brothel—a scene suggesting that decadence and degradation are not in any way new to his experience?

Mann was very careful to describe the gradual evolution of the infatuation, which begins by touching Aschenbach's aesthetic sense and finally grows more and more passionate, sexual, and compulsive. In the story it takes some time for Aschenbach to admit to himself that he is sexually drawn to Tadzio. Dirk Bogarde, unfortunately, plays Aschenbach as an overt (if shy) homosexual from the outset. He smiles to himself rather lasciviously when he sees Tadzio and an older boy embrace, and the loving glances he exchanges with Tadzio seem quite knowing and provocative even at the very beginning. This adds to the muddle; it isn't easy to reconcile the tranquil flashbacks of Aschenbach's happy marriage with the mannerisms of a fussy old queen. Dirk Bogarde has been criticized for his performance, but I think the performance itself is fine—intelligent, inventive, deeply-felt. Bogarde makes Aschenbach alternately foolish and dignified, and he is one of the few actors alive who could handle those stagy philosophical dialogues in the flashbacks; we believe that he really cares about the ideas. Bogarde cannot be blamed for inconsistencies and confusions in the conception of the role.

Perhaps if some of the undercurrents were captured, we wouldn't be so troubled by literal questions. Of course *Death in Venice* is a difficult work to adapt, and I am not sure that any film-maker could have found a fully satisfactory equivalent for the novella's intellectual complexity and psychological subtlety. But this is one literary classic with unusual cinematic potential. Some of the problems may be insoluble; still, a visually inventive director might have given the film a rich, mysterious, poisonous atmosphere that could have done a great deal to express Mann's themes.

On this level too, the film is a failure. Visconti has lavished a great deal of care on the hats and the table lamps, but in a larger sense, he has not found a meaningful visual style for the story; he does not even take advantage of Venice, one of the greatest movie locations in the world. The reason Mann chose it for his setting is that

it is the one European city that seems Eastern—Byzantine, even Oriental, slightly pagan. When Aschenbach first decides to travel, he envisions a strange African land—"a tropical marshland, beneath a reeking sky, steaming, monstrous, rank. . . ." Venice is the closest counterpart he can find—a rich and luxurious Renaissance empire, and at the same time foul and overripe, a city in decay. If the city had come alive visually, that might have helped to focus Mann's theme of the ambivalence of physical beauty and to dramatize Aschenbach's descent into Dionysian sensuality. In the novella there is a powerful dream sequence near the end in which Aschenbach sees himself participating in a bacchanal of lust and bestiality. The filmic equivalent is a brief sequence of Aschenbach in his hotel room, talking to himself about his degradation: "Wisdom, truth, human dignity . . . all finished." It seems a final irony that this "visual" film (probably no more than 30 of its 130 minutes have dialogue) has to express the climax of its story—an inherently cinematic climax—with a few feeble, inadequate words.

Many of the images in the film are admittedly quite lovely in themselves—but as still shots, not moving pictures. Even the loveliest are essentially hollow—high-class postcard art, images that serve as mere decoration. At the very beginning Visconti spends five or ten minutes filming the coming of dawn as Aschenbach sails into Venice, and a little later he spends another ten minutes panning around the rich people assembled in the lavish hotel lobby. These are impressive virtuoso effects, but they remain effects, arbitrary set-pieces that might fit just as easily into a story quite different in meaning. Even the handsome, muted pastel colors—a preponderance of whites, greys, pale greens—are wrong; for this story of temptation and intoxication, the colors must at times be voluptuous, florid, gaudy. The consistently tasteful decor cannot encompass the changes in Aschenbach's feelings. His growing desperation and compulsiveness should find some expression in the images; we need to *see* the ripening of physical sensations that is a crucial part of Aschenbach's surrender to chaos.

If the film had a logic of its own, comparisons to the novella might not be relevant. Visconti does seem to have wanted to be faithful to it, as he was to *The Stranger* (a more successful film) a few years ago. Here he depends on his images, but they are stubbornly inexpressive. *Death in Venice* represents artistic bankruptcy, "visual cinema" without intelligence or imagination—movies as an animated form of interior decoration. Fortunately, *Walkabout* exists as a contrast—a proof that films can speak eloquently to our most profound concerns, in images every bit as delicate, supple, and mature as the language of our finest poets.

JOHN SIMON

Theatre Chronicle

HOW SADLY THE THEATRE IS LANGUISHING at the point where uncertainty, inanition, tiredness and myopia meet. The new season opened on Broadway with a double bill by Robert Anderson, *Solitaire/Double Solitaire*. Even that slash in the title has a desperate look about it. Is it trying to garner unearned prestige from some Kierkegaardian *Either/Or*, or is this punctuational neologism meant to confer the swingingness of a Now look? The first of the two plays, *Solitaire*, is one of those grisly excursions into the future, where men are deprived of love, family, individuality, possessions; instead, they live in "servocels" they are obliged to change daily, where the automated furniture provides electronic pseudocomfort, such as serving savorless food, offering Scopitone-like insipid entertainment, collecting the weekly dose of compulsory sperm, and proffering an option of efficient "self-disposal" for persons over a certain age and under a certain IQ who wish to rid the state of their burdensome presences.

The one escape from this routine is the latter-day brothel, illicit and clandestine, in which ill-trained performers enact families and family life for those who still hanker for it. It seems inconceivable that a state as electronically alert as the one ruling Anderson's world would not readily detect where the protagonist of *Solitaire* hastens to, and even what he does there; it seems equally preposterous that these bordellos, faithfully recreating the trivia and pieties of the home, would not include actual physical contact and intercourse. But Anderson's vision, always inconsistent and incomplete, is here shamelessly derivative as well: there is hardly anything in the play that cannot be found, in *Brave New World*, in 1984, even in *Fahrenheit 451*, except that there the monstrous demands on the individual are kept within the realm of believability.

Yet ineptly as this piece is thought out, unoriginal as it is—competing merely, in Robert Graves's phrase, for "yet more boastful visions of despair"—it still has vestiges of playlikeness about it. *Double Solitaire*, however, is just a series of static monologues and duologues, garnished with a few slide projections and a three-minute film, neither device particularly necessary or suggestive, and included only to confer a trendier look on the proceedings. The main characters here are Charley and Barbara, a middle-aged couple on the verge of divorce or desperation or both. Charley's parents are about to celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary with a reaffirmation of their vows, a prospect that fills the old lady mostly with indifference, except for some irritation with the color slides her husband proposes to

project on the walls for the occasion, which have a way of showing her at unflattering angles. All this emerges in a colloquy with Barbara on stage left, during which Barbara speaks only with her eyes. Next, on stage right, a colloquy between Charley and his father, who finds married life fairly boring and trying, but is convinced that what little one has to show for it—e.g., color slides—is better than the gallivanting of his brother Philip, who will surely come to a sticky end! The old gentleman tries to persuade Charley that he and Barbara should join the golden-wedding pair in the reaffirmation of *their* vows. Charley will consider it.

Next, on stage left again, there's a monologue by a friend of Barbara's, Sylvia, who has found a tidy solution in running a boutique by day, and, at nightfall, taking in a half dozen gentlemen friends, one for each night of the week, but never, as we have learned from a work of similar profundity, on Sunday. The totally unconvincing schematism of this option is made even more unbelievable by Martha Schlamme's obtusely arch performance. Barbara listens mutely, merely supplying appropriate smiles, and one feels that Strindberg's *The Stranger* is sticking its head a bit clumsily through the backdrop. Now we journey back to stage right, where Charley has a dialogue with George, a married roué. (At least I think he is married; he may also be separated or divorced, but I find this conversation particularly hard to recall.) What seems to emerge is that this type of adjustment is also precarious, bringing only fleeting satisfactions diluted with cynicism. We now remain stage right for the ensuing confrontation between Charley and his twentyish son, Peter.

Here we get something new: instead of the slides of Charley's wedding, with which the previous scenes were punctuated, Peter projects for us a short film about his coming home to his girlfriend in the afternoon, hopping in slow motion, and bearing flowers to her in the bathtub. The two of them plan to go to Europe and show this film at various festivals. Now I have sat through some pretty horrible film festivals in my time, and have seen some abysmal underground films at them. But never anything so utterly vacuous and lacking even in the crummiest minimal invention. And if it is meant as parody, is there a single laugh in it? Peter and the girl do not intend to marry, just live together while it is enjoyable. This is Anderson's view of the latest tendencies (personally, I think a reaction is already setting in, but never mind), which Peter does not make much more interesting than conjugal constraint. This is probably deliberate on the author's part, but in the context of the generally flavorless writing, one can't be sure. Thus within the space of a minute or two, Anderson will give us three such platitudes as "like a caged tiger," "wild goose chases," and "No, Charley, you can't go that route."

We now move to stage center for the final duel between Charley and Barbara on a Caribbean beach, whither he has spirited her away for a week's renewed honeymooning. It turns out that Charley has

been trying to keep the romance going in the marriage, either on martinis, or, if it's too early in the morning, on nostalgia. Barbara points out that they have no real feelings left for each other, that the girl she was is now old enough to be her own mother, and that all this factitious pawing and bedding, instead of bringing them closer together, has the contrary effect. "I sometimes feel like a whore in bed with a stranger," she cries out, with less than startling originality. The scene is a prolonged battle of witlessnesses between a rather juvenile husband trying to seduce his wife, and the bored spouse behaving as anaphrodisiacally as possible and, moreover, advocating divorce.

This has been hailed as Anderson's finest writing to date, presumably because there is no solution offered. But it takes more than the lack of a happy ending to compensate for the lack of a play. The height of the wit here is a line like this one Charley tosses at his deflatory wife: "When François Villon asked 'Where are the snows of yesteryear,' he did not want some smartass to say, 'They're melted.'" It is significant that the audience rewards this line with a loud laugh. It is more significant that the playwright seems to be here as elsewhere in basic sympathy with Charley, even though he cannot help making him sophomoric and a bumbler. But the most significant thing is that the aforementioned smartass is none other than Anderson himself, who throughout this climactic encounter keeps repeating, "They've melted." We are shown a failure, but not how or why it came about, and the dialogue never acquires that poetry that makes words transcend their meaning. For when you ask about the snows of yesteryear, the very farfetched absurdity of the question with its ironic border gives it a poignancy, a resonance beyond mere denotations. But ask Anderson's standard questions, and provide the routine answers or nonanswers, and the whole thing lies in front of you, grey and melting like the snow of yesterday.

There is some good acting in the production. Richard Venture is fine at conveying the bedevilment of middle age; John Cromwell stylishly carries on the tradition of elegant stage greybeards (he was terrible as a director in Hollywood, but has been happily reborn as an aging character actor on the stage); Joyce Ebert has the right mixture of weariness and edginess as the wife who wants out. Kurt Lundell's set for *Solitaire* is fascinating; for *Double Solitaire*, a bit simplistic. Arvin Brown's staging is pedestrian, but what can you do as the jockey of a wingless, three-legged Pegasus?

The off-Broadway season began with something called *Leaves of Grass*, in which Whitman's poems were rewritten as Broadway lyrics, had show tunes appended to them, and were belted out by a singing, dancing and attitudinizing quartet. Of this, the less said, the better. The real opener, then, was Terrence McNally's *Where Has Tommy Flowers Gone?* From the author of *Next* and several other not uninteresting one-acters, this came as a distinct disappointment. But

there lies part of the problem: *Tommy* is a full-length play, and most of today's playwrights can write only, in however many acts, one-acters. The explanation, though I and many others have nibbled away at it, remains to be more comprehensively stated. McNally's play is dragged out beyond any shape or structuring: it concerns a kind of hippie living on charming conmanship, petty thievery, and air. He is given endless monologues and comic solo turns, and is intermittently joined by his English sheepdog, Arnold; by his current girl, Nedda Lemmon, whom he met as a fellow shoplifter at Bloomingdale's; and by an old-time bit player whom he adopted off the sidewalk. But we mostly see Tommy's momentary encounters with shadowy passers-by whom he tries to get money from; watch him doing an impersonation of Marilyn Monroe in heaven, or going into recollections of his family, with his various kinfolk in Florida seen and heard on three screens showing simultaneously the identical footage. Why so much of those fugitive strangers, why the irrelevant and campy impersonations, why three screens when one would do as well, and none at all better yet?

There is a desperation about this kind of playwriting: garrulity posturing as content, gimmickry pretending to be form, bizarreness mistaking itself (or hoping to be mistaken by others) for an original voice. Actually, Tommy is a type, a mode, a subculture far more than he is an individual. But there is also another difficulty: Tommy is presented as a heterosexual in one principal and several peripheral involvements. Yet neither as McNally wrote him, nor as Robert Drivas acts him, does our hero suggest a heterosexual. Not only does he go in for female impersonation (aside from Marilyn Monroe, he'll give you Pat Nixon's meeting with a dying Puerto Rican girl, and, for shoplifting purposes, he dons his ever-handly disguise as a nun), he also relishes every kind of campy list-making. Surely we must recognize by now a new version of the Homeric catalogue: the homoerotic catalogue. This consists of enumerating pell-mell old movies, movie actors, names from yellowing gossip columns, song titles, show titles, cartoon characters, antiquated locutions, and other verbal paraphernalia from the magpie's nest of the campy memory. Such oneupmanship through *faisandé* data is the special pride of a certain type of homosexual, and is quite rare among heterosexuals. Moreover, there is a kind of brittleness, affectlessness, cuteness about Tommy (both written and acted) that do not ring true in a heterosexual context, and his involvement with Nedda is evoked only in the most surface-skimming terms.

Jacques Levy's staging is gimmicky without being really clever, the set and costume design are undistinguished, but the supporting roles are well enough played by man, woman and dog alike. I particularly cherished the bouncy freshness a newcomer named Barbara Worthington brought to a number of girls who flit through Tommy's life. One would be strongly tempted to urge Mr. McNally to write the kind

of play he really has a feeling for, and do it forthrightly; but when one remembers *And Things That Go Bump in the Night*, which seemed to fill that bill, one is stopped shudderingly short.

Meanwhile the Broadway musical scene also swung into action with the arrival of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. This is the highly-touted "rock opera" by two young Englishmen, which, as a record, sold two-and-a-half million copies; in a concert version, toured America with loud and lucrative success; and had, at the box office, an advance sale of over a million dollars. (It may be interesting to note that, in the words of its shrewd producer, the recording of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's "rock opera" sank in London "like a stone." No one can be a rock prophet of the Lord with honour in his own country.) The show has no book, and merely relates the last seven days of Christ in today's lingo set to occasional rhymes and to trendy occasional music. The latter is medium-hard rock with overtones of an older Broadway idiom as well as of medium-serious composers: in the orchestral finale, for instance, I kept hearing Massenet. But there are no tunes that impress forcefully, except perhaps for Herod's Charleston, about which more anon. A notch or two below the music are Rice's lyrics, making, for example, Christ sing, "It was nice,/ But now it's gone," or "Then I was inspired,/ Now I'm sad and tired," or "My time is almost through,/ Little left to do/ After all I've tried for three years—/ Seems like thirty!" And this about Mary Magdalene, a reformed Supergroupie with whom our Superstar lives in carnal knowledge: "Who are you to criticize her?/ Who are you to despise her?" She, in turn, intones: "Don't you think it's rather funny/ I should be in this position?/ . . . Yet if he said he loved me,/I'd be lost and frightened:/ I couldn't cope." And Caiaphas concedes: "One thing I'll say for him:/ Jesus is cool."

But it is not so much the blaring obviousness of the music or the mangy doggerel of the lyrics that is to blame; rather, it is the general crassness and opportunism of the conception. At a time when religion of a dubious sort is staging a comeback among Jesus freaks, what could be a better investment than a show that features a rock-singing, long-haired and barefoot enemy of the establishment—for that is virtually all this Christ is—who loves his girl manfully and handles his mike like a pro? And how those Jewish priests and Roman governors, to say nothing of the spear-carrying pigs, hate his guts! But he just keeps crooning and shrieking his guts out, and is finally crucified in style on an inverted golden triangle, while above him, in a large, winged contraption housing four seminude angels (the metamorphosed Judas and three black cuties, clearly the Celestial Supremes), chant his praises and the chorus bops out its hosannas as "Sanna ho! Sanna hey!" It is not sacrilegious; merely meretricious and silly.

The most spectacular aspect of the show is the staging by Tom O'Horgan, who clearly imposed his conception on the set and costume

designers, as well as devised the rudimentary choreography. O'Horgan thinks big, which wouldn't be bad; but he thinks big without actually thinking. Take the opening stage image. Three huge, Art Nouveau, backward-slanting panels form a sort of curtain; together, they look like one side of a towering *fin-de-siècle* pyramid with its tip lopped off. Suddenly we notice four scantily clad bodies wriggling across the high top edge of the panels, and painfully making their wormlike way down as the three panels slowly sink back toward a horizontal position. They never quite make it, forming instead a sharply raked floor, over whose far horizon more and more bikinied bodies emerge to dance some kind of prehistoric tribal dance (shades of *Lenny*, also directed by O'Horgan). This is admittedly clever, but is it in any way germane? You might say it represents pagan revelry before the coming of Christ. (Even then, what's all that crawling down from snub-nosed pyramids?) But not so—for, next thing, a large silver chalice rises out of the floor and from it emerges a smaller silver chalice that turns around and turns out to be Jesus Christ in a high-collared cape made, it seems, out of numerous thin silver ropes. Now the ensemble is suddenly clothed, but proceeds to indulge in the same gyrations as in the previous pagan ritual. It is all merely a grandiose O'Horganian visual non sequitur.

And there is an unbroken chain of these. Bits of scenery, whole sets, actors are continually rising or descending through the air; large objects of peculiar shapes are carried on, sometimes with people stepping out of them. A huge portrait of Caesar unfurls upward like an accordion, until the image has six foreheads and as many pairs of eyes, for no reason whatever. Herod comes out of a mighty carapace whose insides may be a weird maw or the cross section of a uterus. Pilate is suddenly provided with an enormous pewter elephant's trunk, but inverted so that the thicker end faces the audience; from it hangs a big pewter tongue. The object requires a couple of men to carry it on. Quite often cloths or gauzes billow forth from nowhere to cover a person or the entire scene. For the Gethsemane song, a plastic box, the size of an upright piano, comes down from the flies and hangs above Christ's head; at the end of the number, it is slowly hoisted away. It glitters like a fancily wrapped candy box sent to Gargantua on his birthday, but what it means is anybody's guess. Many objects look like bones or genitalia, others like gold or silver lollypops of giant size and embossed with faces (mostly stylized suns and moons); a pair of silver dentures, the size of cocktail tables, is carried on in a procession and used more or less as cymbals. On and on come the monstrosities, inspired by Beardsley, Félicien Rops, abstract expressionism, pop art, with an occasional touch of Odilon Redon or Gustav Klimt. And there are gaudy projections on the backdrop as well as strange cutouts in it, and, always, moving platforms. But all it proves is O'Horgan's megalomania, and that is no news.

Since all the singing is through microphones whose wires are disguised as shaggy ropes, there is no judging the voices. There is no acting to speak of, though Ben Vereen's Judas wiggles well on the floor in remorse, and Jeff Fenholt is a good enough pop Jesus, with a voice that can slither and quaver up and down the octaves. Yvonne Elliman has a certain visual and vocal innocence as Mary Magdalene, and Barry Dennen exudes a convincingly cold worldliness as Pilate. King Herod (Paul Ainsley) has the best number: emerging from a portable sea monster, he is a bloated outlandish ogre in drag, with Carmen Miranda headgear and huge cerulean wedgies, the shape and size of a couple of Roman triremes. He sashays and cavorts in a malicious Charleston, with which he taunts the bound Christ; capering along with him are two tiny priests in effeminate, diaphanous gowns, and they are vocally joined by the entire chorus. Here, for once, the doggerel bites as well as it barks, the music wallows in lilting derivativeness, and that huge, fat, mincing figure, supported by two little cavorting book ends, all combine to make some genuinely obscene merriment. But they cannot redeem an evening of bloated, eye-and-ear-boggling mindlessness and tawdriness.

Mindlessness reaches its apogee at the Guggenheim Museum, into which has moved the Company Theatre of Los Angeles (where else?) with something that calls itself *The James Joyce Memorial Liquid Theatre*. This is a lumping together of Esalen encounter techniques, a happening, and a children's Hallowe'en party. It is mostly audience participation stuff, and you are led from one level of the Guggenheim to the next, given preparatory pep talks, made to play propaedeutic word games with your body instead of with words, served some aromatic tea, and guided, with your eyes shut ("Trust us!" the anonymous voices murmur in your ear) through a maze, where gauze-clad figures of various sexes touch you, hug you, kiss you, squeeze tightly against you, feed you grapes, stick your fingers into water, and finally give you wet, bisexual kisses—as you open your eyes, you find the kissers to have been identically, and thus misleadingly, gauze-wrapped youths and girls.

Then you watch a belly dancer among some rather poor psychedelic projections, and are broken down into small groups in which you play more, bigger and better sensitivity games under the leadership of the liquid thespians. You are paired off not with the person you came with, and there follow all kinds of dual or communal rubbings, rollings, holdings, gropings, pressings together, hoistings up and being passed around from hands to hands, and similar wordless play. Not very much theatre in this play, to be sure, but it could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship with someone you have, quite literally, picked up. Then you squat on the floor and watch as, on a stage, a boy and a girl enact a pantomime accompanied by inchoate sounds; it represents their discovery of their own and each other's genitalia, and is backed up by rock music from an orchestra on a balcony.

Now, as the band plays on, you form larger groups and do snake dances as you chant nonsense words. At last, everything merges into a compact riot of bodies thronging toward a mystic center, after which there is just abandoned communal dancing with your partner, or anyone, or by yourself. A fitting climax for a strictly platonic orgy.

I could never be against a properly organized public bacchanalia, provided only it was the real thing, and did not pretend to be theatre. Sex of any kind, for those who want it, is unexceptionable. But these presexual, Esalenian rather than Eleusinian, mysteries, these uncopulative couplings in the name of eroticism without sex, body awareness (how deep? how lasting?) without body fulfillment—unless, of course, you successfully exchange telephone numbers, and even then only with quite a bit of *interruptus* (I am referring to the *coitus*, not necessarily to the current state of our telephone service)—no, thanks! *The James Joyce Memorial Liquid Theatre* is all harmless enough tomfoolery for those who relish it, but there is no James Joyce here, and no memorial to anything. As for the theatre in it, it is not so much liquid as liquidated.

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

(Signed) Irene Skolnick
Business Manager

CHARLES W. MILLARD

Cézanne's Progress

I have tried to make of Impressionism something solid and durable like the art of the museums.

—Cézanne

NOT INFREQUENTLY GREAT MASTERS IN ANY MEDIUM arrive at a late style so intense and so personal as to transcend not only their own previous styles and the styles of their time, but also future styles, to such an extent that their work becomes a law unto itself and apparently wholly inaccessible. In much the same way that one hears of *King Lear* as being unactable and the late Beethoven quartets as being unplayable, the late paintings of Cézanne—those produced between about 1900 and 1906—can be said to be unseeable. Dense to the point of opacity, apparently defying every rule of painting in general and Cézanne's painting in particular, they remain some of the most difficult and inapproachable pictures ever painted and, like all such works, the ultimate tribute to the genius of their creator. As is often the case, they represent a transformation of an early style embodying a synthesis of all the most important ideas of the artist's previous work.

By 1865, when he was twenty-six, Cézanne had developed a heavily-impastoed manner in which color was not yet important but in which sharp tonal contrast—often merely between black and white—had a vital organizational role. Indebted no doubt to Manet, it was a style in which shallow space and ponderability of the represented object were of great importance, and one which used the device also adopted by Manet of employing light tones for the parts of the picture most in the foreground and throwing the backgrounds into obscurity. This tended to exert pictorial pressure from background to foreground and worked if not actually to flatten the composition at least to limit its depth severely. The effect was reinforced by developing certain parts of the foreground in darker tonalities and making them contiguous with the background, thus locking foreground and background together. In the 1865 *Still Life with Bread and Eggs* and other still-lives this was done by making the side of the table at the front of the composition of the same tonality as the background, which was some distance behind it. In the portraits it was accomplished by making the beard or part of the clothing of the same tone as the background. In both cases, the total effect was that of "two strong tones played off

En hommage à Jean Renoir, qui fait des chefs-d'oeuvre dans son métier comme Cézanne les fit dans le sien.

against one another" that Zola had noted in the *Olympia*. Cézanne further emphasized surface and suppressed represented depth by building his compositions vertically. Although the *Still Life with Bread and Eggs* is a grouping of objects spread out horizontally, it already employs one of his favorite devices for tying the lower and upper parts of his composition together and hence emphasizing vertical extension: the napkin that conceals the horizontal line of the table edge.

Throughout the middle 1860's Cézanne used a thick, Monticellian paint application that indicates deep tactile involvement with the *matière* itself, and that fact, combined with the nature of many of his subjects (*The Rape, A Modern Olympia*) suggests a nature too sensuous, too attached to the world, to accomplish easily what Cézanne must have known he had it in him to accomplish. This, in turn, suggests a basis for his future retreat to Aix and for the struggle to purify his means, both in terms of facture and subject, that characterized his work for many years. It is a combination of that purification and the earlier sensuousness that lies beneath the synthetic transformation of his late pictures. Nowhere is the struggle between expression and denial of the senses more obvious than in the *Black Clock* of the later 1860's, a painting almost surreal in its content which represents a tremendous advance over the 1865 *Still Life with Bread and Eggs*. Its elements are more subtly composed and more thoroughly integrated than are those of the earlier picture. The shallow space is made more convincing by the use of a mirror, at once surface and depth, and the vertical build-up is emphasized by the cropping of the mirror's frame and the pink vase at the top of the composition, as well as by the aggressive presence of the napkin and the upright shape of the crystal vase. The greater success of the later picture further depends on its sharper tonal contrasts and on the fact that the background is no longer empty, but an object-filled and active part of the composition. But what most strikes one about the painting are the warring presences of the shell and the clock. Not only is the shell overtly sexual in its shape and in the wound-like redness of its lips (the opening cannot be otherwise described), but the paint that defines it is built up with all the heavily-impastoed richness of the works of the immediately preceding years. The clock, on the other hand, is defined with a flat and austere paint application and its black, handless, and minatory presence is rendered at once insubstantial and infinitely more forceful by its amalgamation with its own reflection in the mirror. One cannot imagine a more eloquent statement of conflicting presences within the artist himself, nor a more successful combination of those presences into a single entity.

By the mid 1870's Cézanne was not only developing his own means of unifying his pictures but was ready to accept the means that Impressionism had to offer. His drawing had become freer and because of its increasing irregularity often worked to unify parts of the com-

position—object and background, for example—rather than to separate them. This is perhaps most obvious in the almost monochromatic portrait of Antoine Valabrégue (1874-1875), the irregular contours of which seem to make the figure flake off into surrounding space. This painting is also remarkable for its tonal subtlety, and Cézanne has not only reserved the lightest tone for an area slightly behind the highest point of the picture—the shirt front—but has painted the background in a middle tone that mediates between the tone of the face and that of the clothing. This emphasizes the all-over nature of the pictorial composition by diffusing the light foreground-dark background pattern, an effect further enhanced by the obvious but small-scaled brushwork.

The development of such brushwork was one of the things Cézanne took from Impressionism, along with an interest in landscape and his thenceforth characteristic color combination of blue, green, and ochre. This particular triad, used at close value, relieved the density of Cézanne's pictures and allowed him to explore other avenues for flattening them without their becoming wholly opaque. At least some of his problems in the 1880's were to be due to the introduction of other colors, as in the *Still Life with Cherries and Peaches* in which the dark red area of cherries is too present in the composition and hence disruptive of its unity. The color and scale problem represented by the cherries apparently disturbed Cézanne, for he tilted the dish in which they are contained upward at a different angle from that of the plate holding the peaches, so that they read as a single mass (their individual silhouettes are suppressed) and the color as a single area. Although the pictorial result is uncomfortable, and the effect Cézanne was attempting perhaps beyond his means at this particular moment, the picture is nonetheless a powerful one, and evidence of the intensity of his vision. When he used colors such as red in lighter values, broken with other colors or by compositional intrusions as in the seated portrait of his wife of about 1877, he was better able to integrate them successfully into the ensemble.

Landscape was used by Cézanne to achieve both openness and surface emphasis and his landscapes, even those of Mont Sainte-Victoire, are not distant views but vertically accumulated compositions of natural elements. The diffuseness of natural light as opposed to studio light seems also to have encouraged him in his search for diffuseness of pictorial effect and further justified the close values of his colors.

Impressionism's third offering to Cézanne, its comma-like brushstroke, was of use to him in emphasizing surface by calling attention to the facture of the picture, but was even more helpful in matters of scale. Cézanne began grouping his small brushstrokes, applying several side by side in such a way that from a distance they have the appearance of planes. Although these areas are not actually planes, since they are neither flat nor have regular edges, they can be manipu-

lated like planes, and, most important, their size can be varied according to the number of strokes used for each and their scale can thus be related to that of the canvas as a whole.

The matter of scale was one that became increasingly important to Cézanne throughout the 1880's. As he continued to have a kind of double focus, partly on the surface of the canvas and partly on the objects represented within it, the matter of reconciling actual and represented scale became more acute. In the *Self Portrait with a Beret*, for example, the properly foreshortened body disrupts the composition by being too small in scale for the composition as a whole, a disharmony aggravated by the way the figure's dark tonality makes it stand out against the atmospheric background. Just so, in the *Ginger Pot with Pomegranate and Pears* there are too many small elements for the overall scale of the picture and too great a discrepancy between the small scale of the curtain edge at the top, that of the pears on the table, and that of the books at the upper left. The books, and the table on which they rest, are developed in relation to the canvas itself, while the internal relationships of the other objects tend to be less clearly related to the total composition. One further problem of this picture as compared with the 1895-1898 *Still Life with Apples* (in which the scale of the curtain is more successfully handled) is the pressure exerted by color. The intensity and variety of the color in the *Ginger Pot* gives the painting an unrelieved density that is almost overbearing. Even the whiteness of the towel is modulated in such a way as to detract from its possible value as a relieving agent. In the *Still Life with Apples*, on the other hand, several areas are simply left unpainted, relieving the weight of the colored areas effectively and suggesting a new method for attaining the tonal contrast which had been so important an organizing principle to Cézanne from the start.

These unpainted areas that are characteristic of many of the late pictures have frequently led them to be thought of as unfinished. That this is not, in fact, the case, can be clearly seen in the watercolors that Cézanne executed in increasing numbers. Leaving areas of the paper untouched to function as sky or sea or some other such element was perfectly standard watercolor practice and Cézanne seems soon to have realized that such use of the untouched support offered important possibilities for painting. Since oil paint and canvas have much greater density than watercolor and watercolor paper, however, the effect, if useful, was somewhat different. The flat primed whiteness of the unpainted canvas read as surface, bringing the background forward and unifying the composition. What sometimes appears as lack of finish is, thus, a means of finish, and the "unfinished" pictures are among the most sophisticated and wholly realized paintings in Cézanne's oeuvre. That realization depends not only on the tendency of pictorial space in Cézanne's works to assert itself as surface,

but also on the increasing flatness of represented objects obtained partly by distorted angles of vision. By the 1890's all of these elements—and there seem to be an almost infinite number of them in Cézanne's art—were under almost total control.

In addition to use of unpainted surface, watercolor offered Cézanne a chance to explore overlapping areas of color. The actual transparency of the medium meant that he could apply colors over one another to get an effect of layering that gave him depth at the same time that it emphasized surface. In many of the watercolors it is as if the same composition had been painted on several pieces of glass which were then placed over one another and slightly slipped in such a way as to throw the entire scene out of focus. This dispersion of focus maintained the identity of the colors and shapes and the solidity of the objects represented while fracturing the space so as to bring everything to the surface. It was enhanced by Cézanne's drawing, a broken and thickened contour which helped knit figure and space together. The final effect was of absolutely equal pictorial weight throughout the entire work, every point of the trembling surface being as important as every other. Since Cézanne was apparently able to conceive such equally weighted compositions from the outset, it mattered not at all where he put his brushstrokes so far as the finish of the picture was concerned. In a very real sense the moment he put one stroke on paper or canvas he had produced a finished picture and each subsequent stroke was simply an elaboration.

Clearly, Cézanne could not achieve the same effect in opaque oil as in watercolor, although he sometimes tried by using drastically thinned oil that behaved almost like watercolor, and it is notable that at the end of his life he not infrequently produced identical compositions in both media. Furthermore there is a very meaningful way in which it can be said that the watercolors represent the most advanced work he ever did, the most adventurous and prophetic. But the late paintings, using as nearly as possible the same devices as the watercolors, are in many other ways his greatest testament. Returning to the dark colors of his youth, as well as to the subjects of his youth—principally portraits—Cézanne produced pictures in which he was able to obtain density without opacity, a density which in no way interferes with the layering of space so necessary to him nor with the breathing of his compositions. They are austere and difficult to look at to the point of being unsympathetic, yet immensely powerful. And they clearly represent the victory of the artist over himself, the release of a nature purged and transformed so as to be useful, so as to work with rather than against the art it generated, the total triumph of an individuality.

B. H. HAGGIN

Music Chronicle

ONE OF THE MUSICIANS WHO GAVE ME his recollections of Toscanini for *The Toscanini Musicians Knew* was the bassoonist Hugo Burghauser, who played in the Vienna Philharmonic for a number of years before he was elected its chairman in 1933. I continued to visit him; and he turned out to be an inexhaustible source of interesting information which had the unique value of coming from an actual participant in the incidents he described. It was he who told me what must have been galling for George Szell to remember in later years—that when Toscanini, in the greenroom after Szell's first rehearsal with the NBC Symphony in 1941, berated him for a method of rehearsal which Toscanini considered to be mistreatment of his orchestra, Szell dropped to his knees, embraced Toscanini's knees, and exclaimed, "Forgive me, Maestro!"; and when, amazed, I asked Burghauser how he knew this, he answered with a spreading of upturned hands, "I was there." (He had just come to this country; and as someone who had known Szell in Europe he had attended the rehearsal and was visiting Szell in the greenroom.) And another incident which Burghauser could tell me about because he had been there seems to me worth reporting here.

Burghauser had been talking about the conductors who did hear every note in an orchestral tutti, and did therefore catch the occasional wrong note, as against the conductors who did not. He had recalled how Richard Strauss, when he heard something wrong from, say, the third horn, would not stop but would merely give the player a look, leaving it to him to correct the mistake in his part with the full score later; whereas Toscanini would stop to correct the mistake in the part immediately. This had led Burghauser to recall Toscanini's first orchestral rehearsals of *Tristan und Isolde* in Bayreuth in 1930, at which he corrected mistake after mistake in the printed parts that had gone uncorrected by all the conductors who had conducted *Tristan* in Germany until then—"which," Burghauser had remarked, "was for Furtwängler, a man of great vanity, an unbearable humiliation, and the reason for his antagonism to Toscanini." And then he had recalled the incident I am about to report.

It involved the composer Schönberg, who chose to be out of step with the world and complained all his life about the world's refusal to get in step with him. To those who found his music not only ugly but pointless in its ugliness Schönberg insisted that every note in the texture of a work of his was part of what he had heard in his mind and what had to be heard by the listener; and he complained that on the rare occasion when a work was performed it was performed

inaccurately, and that as a result listeners didn't hear what he had composed. What Burghauser recalled was the occasion in the twenties when Schönberg was rehearsing a small Vienna Philharmonic group for a performance of his *Kammersymphonie*, and at one point the clarinetist Polatschek (whom Koussevitzky later brought to the Boston Symphony) leaned over to Burghauser and whispered that he had just discovered he had by mistake been playing a clarinet in B-flat instead of the clarinet in A in the score, and that Schönberg hadn't noticed it. This led Burghauser to suggest to his fellow wind-players the experiment of playing wrong notes to see if Schönberg would hear them; and Schönberg, it turned out, did not hear them.

Musicians, like all other artists, dislike and despise critics. Nor is this true—as Harold Schonberg has contended in *The Times*—only of the solo performers who get unfavorable reviews which some of them deserve: it is true also of the great singer or pianist who is praised for a performance he knows went badly, and feels contempt for the critic who didn't hear this. And orchestral players, though not directly affected by reviews, have the same feeling: they acquire in their rehearsals and concerts with conductors a knowledge of the capacities and the failings of each that makes them feel contempt for the lack of perception the critics reveal in what they write. When Barenboim made his first appearance as a conductor in New York with the London Symphony I invited Burghauser to attend the concert with me so that I could have an experienced orchestral player's evaluation of Barenboim's technical operation with the orchestra; and I noticed out of the corner of my eye the occasional nervous movements of Burghauser's hands in his lap, which he explained to me afterwards: "As an orchestral musician I felt a vicarious anxiety with the player who had to decide which of the contradictory indications of the conductor's two arms to obey." And Burghauser was bound to feel contempt for the man who wrote in *The Times* the next day that Barenboim had "the clearest, most incisive of beats. . . . His left hand is independent, busy but not fussy, supplementing and not echoing the right."

But this dislike and contempt for critics that celebrated soloists and obscure orchestral players talk about to each other they are tight-lipped about in public. No matter how inaccurate, how injurious in its inaccuracy, how personally offensive even, the review may be, the soloist endures it in silence, aware of an angered critic's power to inflict further injury. Even Glenn Gould, who prefers talking nonsense on anything anywhere to playing the piano marvelously in the concert hall, was silent about Harold Schonberg's personally offensive and vulgar ridiculing of him: ". . . So then the Gould boy comes out, and you know what, Ossip? . . . The Gould boy played the Brahms D minor Concerto slower than the way we used to practice it. (And between you, me, and the corner lamppost, Ossip, maybe the reason

he plays it so slow is maybe his technique is not so good.)" So with orchestral players: they talk about the critics' nonsense contemptuously or indignantly among themselves; but they don't write protests to the newspapers. Stravinsky's sensational published attacks on Winthrop Sargeant and Paul Henry Lang several years ago and on Clive Barnes last spring were unprecedented. And unprecedented too was an action by orchestral players a couple of years ago which received little attention in the press outside of the city where it occurred, and was not understood correctly by many of those who did read about it.

That action was the Boston Symphony Members Association's sending the orchestra's trustees and management a telegram in which it declared *The Boston Globe's* music critic, Michael Steinberg, *persona non grata* and asked that he not be welcomed to the orchestra's concerts; and its informing *The Boston Globe* of this in another telegram. Even in Boston—where *Globe* readers had read the Steinberg review which impelled the orchestra to its action, and were given parts of the texts of the two telegrams with statements by the orchestra's management that the issue was not Steinberg's critical judgments but the personal offensiveness that had nothing to do with criticism—Steinberg and *The Globe* were able to persuade a number of people that his right to freedom of critical speech had been attacked. And in New York, readers of that newspaper of record, *The Times*, were not given the texts of the Steinberg review and the orchestra's telegrams that were essential for a correct understanding of the incident and its significance, but were merely told in a summary account from the *Times* Boston correspondent that Steinberg had written "a highly critical review of a performance by Carlo Maria Giulini," which had caused the orchestra to demand "that Mr. Steinberg be denied admission to concerts until he apologized for recent reviews," and that "Mr. Steinberg's musical scholarship has not been questioned" but "one source close to the orchestra said that Mr. Steinberg's style and manner displayed a 'personal arrogance that becomes offensive'"—not enough for a correct idea of the realities of the incident.

The Giulini performance was one of Brahms's Fourth, concerning which Steinberg wrote:

If Danny Kaye or Victor Borge were to conduct a performance of the Brahms 4th just like the one Carlo Maria Giulini conducted Friday afternoon in Symphony Hall, one so raging and overwrought, one with its upbeats so stretched, with such crazed dislocation of tempo, and accompanied by a similar visual production with such prodigality in expressions of tragic suffering and deep knee-bends, the audience would have been in stitches. . . . The performance, instead of being the first ever fully to explore the comic possibilities of the Brahms 4th, proceeded from nothing more uncommon than opportunism and meretricious vulgarity.

As it happened, I had reported concerning Giulini's performance

of the Brahms Second with the Philadelphia Orchestra the preceding season that "the orchestra demonstrated its high regard for him by executing with unfailing beauty of sound every italicized detail of what it must have regarded as a mistakenly overemphatic statement of the work"—the significance of this being that orchestral players are suspicious and cynical about conductors and on the alert for the slightest sign of personal exhibitionism, so that the beautiful playing the Philadelphia men had done in Giulini's misconceived Brahms Second had been evidence of how completely he had convinced them of his sincerity and dedication. Clearly he had convinced the Boston Symphony men as completely; and while they didn't question Steinberg's right to his disapproval of the excesses of Giulini's overemphatic performance of the Fourth, they did question Steinberg's right to *his* excesses is his report on the performance—his intemperate description of it, his ridiculing of Giulini's awkward conducting stances and movements, and above all his attributing Giulini's performance to improper and ignoble motives. It was this "unwarranted, cruel and hostile attack on our illustrious guest conductor, Mr. Giulini," which the Boston Symphony players were right in thinking had "gone far beyond the scope of musical criticism," that impelled them to request the exclusion of Steinberg from their concerts. And the same position was taken by the orchestra's manager in his reply to the telegram, in which he said the management also was offended by "the immoderate and unwarranted tone" of Steinberg's writing; and by the president of the orchestra's board of trustees in a letter to *The Globe*, in which he said he had hesitated to write because he was a strong believer in independent criticism and had often defended Steinberg against his detractors, but now felt that his "undisciplined and irresponsible reviews"—including the one that had "excoriated and ridiculed Giulini"—were damaging to Boston's musical life. But *The Globe's* editorial reply was that

A music critic who pleased everybody would not be worth his salt, nor would a critic who pleased no one. A critic must criticize when that seems to him warranted, but always within the bounds of fairness and good taste. The quality of the performance is what should count. Personalities should play no part, whether in criticism of the performer or of the critic himself. Above all, the critic's right to criticize must be protected when he comes under attack.

And most of the published letters which this comment introduced were from readers whom Steinberg and *The Globe* had succeeded in getting to believe what was not true—that his right to criticize had been attacked by the Boston Symphony's players, management and trustees.

It was at this very time that I received a telephone call from someone who said he was taking the liberty of calling me to find out to whom among the *Times* executives he should address his demand

for a confrontation with Harold Schonberg in this executive's presence concerning a false statement by Schonberg in his review of a concert the day before. The concert had been one at which Artur Schnabel had played concertos with an assembled orchestra; and Schonberg in his review had spoken of the poor quality of this orchestra; whereas in fact, said my caller, the orchestral contractor for the concert had assembled a group of first-rate players who had tried their best but had been frustrated and defeated by the conductor's inability to provide the guidance they had to have for precise execution as a group. I told my caller I didn't think he would be able to get to any of the important executives at *The Times*; but if he did, he must realize, first of all, that Schonberg was *The Times's* music critic because these executives lacked the understanding of music that would have enabled them to know he shouldn't be; and that lacking this understanding they would assume *The Times's* music critic had been right in what he had said about Schnabel's orchestra. And in the second place, even if my caller were able to convince the *Times* executive he spoke to that Schonberg had been wrong, the *Times* position to the public was that anyone it selected to speak with its authority in his field was qualified to do so, and therefore no *Times* executive could possibly, even in private conversation, admit that a *Times* writer had shown himself to be *not* qualified to do so. The most my caller could hope was that *The Times* might publish a letter; and—disappointed but convinced by what I had told him—he said he would write one. If he did, *The Times* didn't publish it.

I had spoken to him not only with *The Boston Globe's* editorial in mind, but with an experience I had just had myself with a *Times* executive. Schonberg had never replied in print to anything I had written about his writing; but in the article in which he contended that the musicians who attacked critics were the ones who got unfavorable reviews, he argued that freedom of criticism was part of the free exchange of ideas, and added that this didn't mean critics should themselves be immune from criticism: "Bernard Haggin thinks that I am a disgrace to American music criticism, and I think that he is a sour, pedantic old maid of a critic who was left at the altar many years back and has since been taking it out on everybody else." In a letter (not for publication) to the managing editor of *The Times*, A. M. Rosenthal, I said it was as legitimate for Schonberg to evaluate my writing as for me to evaluate the writing of other critics; but it was amazing that a paper as concerned with propriety and decorum as *The Times* permitted in its columns the personal offensiveness of Schonberg's review of Glenn Gould's performance of the Brahms concerto and now of his statement about me; and with such writing—whether about Gould or about me or about anyone else—Schonberg disgraced *The Times*. Also, I had never made a proposal to the *Times* music department; and so my low estimates of the *Times* music critics' writing hadn't represented the emotions of a rejected

suitor. It would require the text of Mr. Rosenthal's reply, which cannot be quoted without his permission, to convey the contemptuous tone in which he wrote that it was pretty obvious that Schonberg and I didn't care much for each other; and that in Schonberg's place he would have ignored my criticisms since Schonberg was the best music critic in America and didn't have to defend himself. In reply to this I got Bernard Shaw to write from Purgatory:

Dear Mr. Rosenthal:

"Editors, by some law of Nature . . . are *always* ignorant of music, and consequently . . . an editor who can tell at a glance whether a review, a leading article . . . or a news paragraph is the work of a skilled hand or not . . . will let me inundate his columns with pompous platitude . . . bad grammar, bad logic . . . every conceivable blunder and misdemeanor that a journalist can commit, provided I do it in the capacity of his musical critic . . ."

Yours,

Bernard Shaw

(*Music in London*, Vol. 3, pp. 238-9)

And I added a postscript from me: "Thank you for making it clear why Mr. Schonberg was able to fill the columns of *The Times* with his arrogant personal offensiveness to Glenn Gould: it's 'pretty obvious' that you and he have a lot in common."

I too could say "I was there" to the people who have been haranguing us about the pianists of the distant past—Hofmann, Godowsky, de Pachmann, Busoni, Rosenthal, Lhevinne—having been giants who in their dealing with their instrument and its literature reduced the pianists of today to insignificance. That is, I could say that whereas most of these people know those pianists only from phonograph records I heard them in the concert hall. Godowsky, for example, was said last year by Harold Schonberg, who knows his playing only from records, to "[make] every other pianist sound like a peasant." And I could say that I heard Godowsky in Carnegie Hall in January 1914 in performances of a trio and sonatas of Beethoven with Ysaye and Gerardy; that I heard him again that year or the next in a recital in Aeolian Hall, and still remember the performance of Chopin's Etude in thirds that testified to his mechanical mastery of the piano; that even at that date I was able to perceive the absence in this mechanically perfect playing of the enlivening phrasing of the music I had heard in the playing of Hofmann and others; and that by 1921 I had heard enough to be shocked by Godowsky's rattling off Beethoven's Concerto No. 4 as if it were a Czerny exercise. I *could* cite these recollections of the living Godowsky's playing against Schonberg's extravagances about the performances on records—but

I don't: I am entirely willing to judge, as Schonberg and the others do, by what is to be heard on records. The electrically recorded performances, according to Schonberg, show a startling change from the "calm, pluperfect kind of piano playing, a little lacking in tension," on the earlier acoustic records to a new "passion, depth, involvement"; but I heard nothing of this kind last year in the performance of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 81a (*Les Adieux*) reissued on an International Piano Library record: it was merely an intelligently conceived, smoothly executed performance, with none of the powerful note-to-note continuity of tension and outline in the building of coherent structure that one hears in the performance recorded by Cliburn, whom Schonberg and his colleagues continue to treat with condescension, when not with contempt, but whom I continue to find one of the greatest musicians I have heard play the piano, a real giant towering above most of Schonberg's giants of the past.

On a Victrola record I heard last year performances by another Schonberg giant, Lhevinne, that confirmed the impression I got of his playing at his first New York appearance in the twenties (the last I attended): that it exhibited remarkable digital facility but no ability to impart musical significance to the notes that were produced in dazzling profusion.

And I also heard last year several records with performances by Hofmann that were offered as incontestable evidence of his having been the greatest of those legendary pianists who in the early years of this century exhibited a mastery of the resources of their instrument, and a mastery of the correct style of performance of 19th-century Romantic music, that are not to be heard today. From 1914 I continued to hear Hofmann year after year, sharing the general view of him as the greatest of the time; but by 1933, when I reported in *Hound & Horn* on the last concerts of his I attended, I had come to think he provided the worst example of the corrupting influence of the virtuoso career.

Playing the same [limited group of] works all these years, Hofmann has found relief or interest in playing them differently, in putting more and more "interpretation" into them. There survive certain performances—of Beethoven's Sonata Opus 111, the slow movements of the Sonata Op. 101 and the "Emperor" Concerto—that are still unequaled in their simplicity, clarity and power. Only a detail here and there betrays the tendency which made hash of the Händel-Brahms Variations, the Chopin B flat minor Sonata and parts of the Beethoven Sonata Opus 101 and Chopin B minor Sonata. These works he used as an acrobat would have used a trapeze: to exhibit to gaping audiences his powers of "interpretation." I mean this sort of thing: playing a phrase with a scheme of dynamics the direct opposite of what Brahms prescribed and in direct opposition to the tendency of the phrase; repeating the phrase (or

the entire exposition in a sonata) with a different scheme of dynamics; picking out one note from each of a series of accompaniment chords, and bringing out these notes as a counter-melody which Brahms or Chopin never dreamed of; and various other businesses which combined to produce some of the most abominable playing I have ever heard. I can see the reviews if it had been a young pianist: “. . . youthful excesses of which it is to be hoped time will cure him.” But of Hofmann it was “. . . heights of inspired musicianship.”

From some of the records I heard last year I learned how much worse the playing got to be after 1933. The 1935 and 1938 performances on a Victrola record, described as “object lessons of their kind”, were lessons instead in how the pieces should not be played: in the brisk, brittle treatment of the *Allegro maestoso* opening of the first movement of Chopin's Sonata Op. 58, the hurried, nervously mannered delivery of the *sostenuto melody of its second subject*, I didn't hear a correct playing of this music; nor in the performances of Chopin's Waltz Op. 64 No. 1 (*Minute*) and Berceuse in tempos too fast to achieve anything but dazzlingly fast passage work and figurations; nor in the performance of Chopin's Nocturne Op. 15 No. 2 in an incessantly and senselessly mannered style which didn't leave one bar undistorted and produced a whole without coherent shape. These were not performances which had anything to teach about the right style for Chopin to Rubinstein, Lipatti, Cliburn, Ashkenazy, Hara-siewicz, Pollini. And it was in these pianists' recorded performances of Chopin's Concerto No. 1 that one heard subtleties and elegances of phrasing, not in the Hofmann performance of the late thirties on an International Piano Library record, in which the reviewers reported hearing those subtleties and elegances that set Hofmann apart from all other pianists: what his performance actually offered in the opening *Allegro maestoso* movement was an excessively hurried and wilfully, erratically mannered delivery of melodic phrases that destroyed their melodic shape and grace.

On another I. P. L. record was another excessively hurried performance that was destructive of the expressive character of Beethoven's Concerto No. 4. But then I came to an I. P. L. record with a number of Hofmann performances transferred from Brunswick acoustic records of the early twenties, one of which was a beautifully phrased and shaped Chopin Nocturne Op. 15 No. 2. The shapeless 1938 performance of this piece I had heard on the Victrola record was, then, an appalling distortion of what Hofmann had recorded for Brunswick at a time when he was still playing the piano as a great musician.

But even in the years when he was a great pianist and musician Hofmann didn't reduce Schnabel or Lipatti or Artur Rubinstein or the outstanding young pianists of today to insignificance; nor did

the other pianists of the distant past that are alleged to have done so. As I said here once before, de Pachmann, Busoni and their contemporaries were not pianists who operated with freedom controlled by taste in the correct style for 19th-century music which they knew and pianists of today are ignorant of; they were pianists who felt free to inflict on whatever music they played the same tasteless distortions and extravagances, for the same egotistic purpose, and with the same lack of concern for anything but that purpose, as Tetrizzini, De Lucia and the other singers of that period. And the distinguished young pianists of today—Cliburn, Ashkenazy, Rogers—who operate with respect for the composer's text do so in the same way as Rethberg, Bjoerling, Flagstad and Steber: they don't, as Schonberg and Winthrop Sargeant ask us to believe, merely play the printed notes with no concern for expressiveness like undistinguishable human metronomes, but shape—each in his own unmistakably different way, representing the exercise of his personal taste—the progression of notes for expressive purpose with a plasticity in tempo and sonority which they keep within the limits of proportion and coherence that the Busonis and de Pachmanns cared nothing about.¹

¹ There is one more record to mention of those I heard last year—the Victrola with Rachmaninov's unbearably distorted performance of Chopin's Sonata Op. 35, but also his performances of smaller Chopin pieces, which were made exciting not only by his arrestingly incisive way of playing the piano, but by the arrestingly incisive operation of his mind—notably in the pointing up of details in the Waltzes that were played with enchanting grace. These, certainly, were the performances of a superb pianist and musician; but they didn't reduce Lipatti's wonderful performances of the Waltzes to insignificance.

Reviews

VERNON YOUNG

Lines Written in Rouen

"... My God, it is a test,
This riding out the dying of the West."
—Robert Hass¹

IF I WERE GOD, persuaded suddenly to give the human race an ampler share of a single asset, I might be undecided as to whether the gift should be a hearable speaking voice, decent manners or a sense of humor. (True, if I *were* God I would not *be* undecided!) Emerging from many volumes of contemporary poetry (mainly American) sent me for this assignment, I'll settle for the gift of humor. It would forbid the publication, if not the commission, of at least a third among the score received. Today, of *every* score there would always be at least a third which even ten years ago would have never been printed. The only alleviation I can find is that since few people read poetry anyway and even fewer buy it, most bad poets just naturally die on the vine—which can't be said of bad American novelists, playwrights or movie-makers. And there are, all told, several excellent poets in the United States: not numerous if you are counting 200 million people but enough to console us (the fastidious minority) if no more came of age tomorrow.

Of the first seven poets I have footnoted,² I can say little they will find helpful and even less that will profit my readers. I shall not place bets on the future of any among them. Two, Michael Brownstein and Michael Benedikt (curiously, they share initials as well as propensities), are by no definition poets. A new publishers' perversion is to call any slipshod impressionism, especially the scatological variety, either "poetic," meaning effusive and foggy, or "prose poetry," meaning God-knows-what—and on that genre, more later. Creeley, Kaplan and Tate are chiefly writing poems about their tacit disbelief that they're poets at all. Tate's dilemma, expressed in "The Professor is Working," is a familiar one on the American

¹ Book Buying in the Tenderloin," THE HUDSON REVIEW, Vol. XX, No. 4 (Winter 1967-68).

² BRAIN STORMS, by Michael Brownstein. Bobbs-Merrill Co. \$5.00. MOLE NOTES, by Michael Benedikt. Wesleyan University. \$2.95. ST. MARTINS, by Robert Creeley. Black Sparrow Press. \$3.00. PAPER AIRPLANE, by Allan Kaplan. Harper & Row. \$5.95. THE TORCHES, by James Tate. Unicorn Press. \$2.00. OUTLYER & GHAZALS, by Jim Harrison. Simon & Schuster. \$2.45. FLESH:DREAM: BOOK, by Robert Kelly. Black Sparrow Press. \$4.50.

scene. Instead of respect and self-disgust the subject-speaker of the poem would have preferred "too many beers" and death by syphilis in Vera Cruz. American colleges are staffed by a horde of self-and-occupation-haters who at the same time doubt their capacity for the creative effort they allege is being suppressed. Too many of them believe that if they lived like Hart Crane, Thomas Wolfe or Dylan Thomas, genius would infallibly result. Of this, also, more later. Hence, the perpetuating institution of incompetent teaching and bad learning. Harrison is another generic case. "I want to die in the saddle. An enemy of civilisation/ I want to walk around in the woods, fish and drink." Who's stopping him? . . . Robert Kelly's photograph ratifies the content of his fat, fat book: bushy eyebrows and beard—the prophet. He's an Anabaptist corrupted further by Rousseau, William Blake and The Book of Mormon. Sometimes he sounds as if he were parodying a Jeffers who had sat at the feet of Allen Ginsberg. His sonnets are not bad.

All but one of these chaps is sick-hungry on the subject of sex and compulsively addicted to the dirty-joke synonyms for loving and for the private parts. I don't know if to have written *one* acceptable poem is a hostage for tomorrow. On that score I would suggest that if Harrison knows "Hospital" is his only poem, he might save himself.

Someone is screaming almost in Morse
code, three longs, a short, three
longs again, Man, woman or animal?

Pale blue room. How many have died
here and will I with my ears drummed
to pain with three longs, one short, three longs.

It's never a yelp, it starts
far back in the throat
with three longs, a short, three longs.

All beasts everywhere listen to this.
It must be music to the gods—
Three longs, one short, three longs.

I don't know who it is,
a beautiful woman with a lion's lungs
screaming three longs, one short, three longs.

"My Unfilled Spaces" is the title of a poem by Paul Zweig.³ These young men are all unfilled spaces and they like it that way. They take to the hills where they encounter only themselves, then moan about *that* recognition, usually in the metres of other poets. "Afraid that I am not a poet/ Yet willing to write/ Even about that." Zweig, however, does own more than an elementary gift for ex-

³ AGAINST EMPTINESS, by Paul Zweig. Harper & Row. \$4.95.

tended solipsism. A lyric poet lurks in these lines ("I Pay with Hunger").

Earth, edible darkness,
 Reminding me that I am a plant
 Without roots, and that's all.
 For my mobility I pay with hunger;
 And the wind knows what to do with me,
 Raging in my throat like a judgment,
 Spending my poor substance year by year,
 Until I am the wind, resolved into
 Its movement, settling finally
 In a field where food awaits me,
 And no wind.

In another vein he is almost Randall Jarrell ("America at War").

I work at night, carried
 By conveyor belts from one sex to another,
 Tired of being loved.

When I kill, it is complicated,
 Instantaneous.
 I crouch inside the gun,
 Waiting for the detonation, fondling
 Letters from home.
 In a moment I will spring,
 Knowing
 That technology cannot replace me.

Marvin Bell⁴ suggests here and there that he has barely graduated from the irresolutions and mirror-gazing that plague his young contemporaries above, but his craftsmanship is confident and his intelligence is in the foreground. Even so, there is a prickly something not assimilated, a source of rancor that remains, in a context ostensibly ironic, as a gust of the uncouth, a drive to savage himself or to appear tougher than his work, taken whole, betrays. (Philip Levine has been emerging from the same smoke of battle. Thematically, while other songs are hummed, the poet in this "sequence" is giving thanks to Eros for diverting him from despair, yet the shadowy form he apotheosizes is often addressed with some viciousness and with infantile fixation on the short word for posterior. Feeding on flesh brings only a sour taste to the narrator which he tries unsuccessfully to identify with ecstasy. For reasons that skirt clear definition the poems are permeated with nausea. Since Bell tends to exploit his Jewishness one concludes there are assumptions, cravings and resentments present which an outsider fails to understand. Half awed, half bored by the verities of the Eternal Road, he's not

⁴ THE ESCAPE INTO YOU: A Sequence, by Marvin Bell. Atheneum. \$3.95.

sure whether he should use the idiom of the Bronx or that of the Psalms to express his private confusions. His best speech is clear, various and illuminating:

I'm in a phone booth in Saratoga Springs.
 The water tastes awful, but very helpful.
 You aren't answering, whatever I'm asking.
 I'm asking right now why you aren't answering.
 It's pleasure, pain, or just love of quiet.
 You're not answering; I've got coins for nothing.

In "A Biography" he anticipates what he fears may be the imperative of the life committed to art:

Women he loved he surrendered,
 as leaf falls for the love of leaf.
 Felons he insulted and readers perverted.
 In the cave of the senseless, it all fit:
 the thin shafts the stars shone down
 could not lighten his life at hard labor.

A circumspect and troubled mind, William Dickey⁵ is likewise not always certain which experiences should be laughed off and which hoarded for graver treatment. In a number of poems in this short collection he hesitates and earns a painful archness; since he is elsewhere superlative they are neither representative nor damaging. I think he's best when firmly confronting the public condition with serene loathing and crisp cinema or, alternatively, treasuring the private hour, reverent but skeptical. The hell of that average life which Flaubert was once deceived into designating "le vrai" has rarely been crushed so effectively with the flat of the hand as in "Suburban," from which I quote the opening sequence and the closing music.

What ought to be admired, then? Not the children surely,
 who are undisciplined energies, smashing their tricycles
 into each other, screaming like machinery screaming.

And not the mothers, spreadeagled on the porch steps
 discussing Crisco and the social status of policemen,
 the huge rollers of their hair bobbing above their chat

Nor the two together, for the mothers, alternately
 like pop-up toasters cry warnings, "Don't do that!"
 and then relapse, while the children do and do.

. . . .

What ought to be admired? The vague sea fog
 obscuring the precision of the planted palms?
 The wind, harrowing up the brief grass clippings?

⁵ MORE UNDER SATURN, by William Dickey. Wesleyan University. \$4.75.

His further, deeper subject (is it not implicit here?) is what he says he has always in America lived with, "the sense of wilderness"; he was speaking topographically but of course doesn't stop there, yet he's far from that juvenile yearning, "my unfilled spaces." A dominant theme in the best of these poems is the existential vacuum and the teasing confidence instilled by "the congratulating sun" after each awful night in which astronomy reminds us that we are anomalies on a planet with no special interest in our species. Daylight assures the poet that he is not alone, how he is part "of institutions, of shared important rooms/ full of companionship and dialogue,/ of the identical words of a language shared/ by everyone I meet. Then *I* am shared/ like a small sun, and warmed fluently." In a country staked out and suburbanized with a rapidity unknown before in history, the tyranny of physical space—around and above, extending, it would seem, to the poles—and the shock of foreshortened time: this, I have always felt, is at the root of the American alienation. The tyranny is a subject for genuine tragedy; more often it becomes material for verbal tumbleweeds. William Dickey has seized a profound opportunity with muted conviction where, in a few sovereign poems, he places that theme squarely within the orbit of the irreducible couple, where wilderness flourishes of necessity: what else but a degree of separateness can shield one human from another in the devastating perpetuity of the intimate life? The embrace that shelters one from the remote wheeling of the stars, and the eluding of the embrace to inscribe the circumference of one's own flesh and nerve, are masterfully expressed in three poems: "Canopus, Vega, Rigel, Aldeberan" (in the sequence, *Apologia*), "The Aging Lovers" and "Nocturne," unsurpassed by any meditative poems written in America, in my opinion. Because two of them originally appeared in *THE HUDSON REVIEW*, I shall restrict myself to a reminder, the moving last stanzas of "Nocturne:"

I love you when you are sleeping, even though
 nightly we must ask each other's leave to wander
 through different dreams. In the cold house, alone
 for another hour, I listen to you breathe
 outside me, a separate fact, until I too
 am permitted sleep, the comfortable disengagement
 of knowledge and awareness, and can be dead till day
 lets us out of ourselves, till the congratulating sun
 marries our names and our languages around us.

Since Dickey is surely one of the best dozen poets now writing in the United States, I find it the more curious that Robert Bly, in his otherwise helpful, and certainly enthusiastic, introduction to the poems of Pablo Neruda and Cesar Vallejo⁶ should imply that no

⁶ NERUDA AND VALLEJO, *Selected Poems*. Edited by Robert Bly. Beacon Press. \$9.95.

very significant poetry is being written today outside of South America and that, now we are in the know, little significant poetry has been written in our time, either in the U.S.A. or England or France (or Eastern Europe, which he ignores). In order to compensate for the off-side position in the world of poetry appreciation of both Neruda and Vallejo (although Neruda is far from being a little-known writer) and no doubt because he has a personal stake in this volume, Bly's strategy is to exalt them by minimizing allegedly overstated reputations in American and European poetry. Clearly, by inference, he believes Neruda to be the greatest poet of the last hundred years, a conclusion with which I want nothing to do. Bly disparages T. S. Eliot, Pound and Dylan Thomas, very largely by his preference for the platform manner of Neruda. He is not content to give Neruda's occasional surrealism its due; his versions are "the greatest surrealist poems yet written in a Western language." Here he makes fruitful distinctions by comparing them with those of Breton and Aragon, but how convincing might he have been if he were forced to include Henri Michaux? Similarly, he defines Vallejo in such a way as to bring Wallace Stevens into the definition, detrimentally, to be sure. I can't imagine anyone else on earth even conceiving that there was any possible point of contact between two such unlike men and poets! Part of Bly's error is, I think, a common American confusion of space-and-altitude with greatness. Much of Neruda's imagery is Andean: he is an exotic. Further, he is spacious, as generous as all outdoors. Restless transformation, political indignation, unhedged subject matter and a kind of surreal exuberance: these are Neruda's traits. They are refreshing, occasionally; they do not necessarily add up to genius. Eliot, Pound, even Thomas—this is what Bly fails to see—we've had; we have more-or-less assimilated them. But they too were once exotic and at any moment after a few years of neglecting them we can rediscover their individual powers and their astonishing influence on all poets under their spell.

Neruda was formed by a different geography, conditioned by the special stress of a South American political climate. Bly would obviously like to have had that background and those stresses. Once I had a fanatical friend who was always saying something like this: "Yes, Tolstoi [or Mann] is great! But I would have *rather been* Dostoievsky! [or D. H. Lawrence]." Who would want to *have been* Dostoievsky, or Vallejo, and had that terrible life? Many young Americans, apparently. They hope for a vile existence in order to make their poetry sublime. Nor does Bly encourage my affection for Neruda by pointing out his debt to Whitman! (I remember that the valiant editors of *Furioso* printed, in one issue, a page-size black box, enclosing the message: "This is to announce to our contributors the death of Walt Whitman.")

In any case, Neruda needs no support from an influence to convey

his special flavor. That flavor, sanguine and sensuous, was to my sense considerably diluted, or soured, by the vehemence with which he siphoned political animosity into his poetry, and I'm far from taken by a poet who protests continually his love of all suffering humanity yet would deliver it to the Iron Maiden of Marxism! Admittedly, it takes a lot of misered heat still to be cursing the actors in the Spanish conquest of the Inca, which Neruda does with bald conviction in "The Heights of Macchu Picchu," "The Head on the Pole" and "Discovery of Chile." On this subject, I consider the Ecuadorian, Andrade (recently translated with fibre and imagination by J. M. Brinnin), a poet of greater pride and poetic integrity. I find Neruda more acceptable when less forensic, as in "Some Beasts" and "It Was the Grape Autumn" (where in fact he's closer to Steinbeck than to Whitman!) or in youthful poems he hasn't surpassed (judging from Bly's selection), like "Sexual Water" and "Gentleman Without Company" in which the young poet was as much oppressed as excited by the universal concupiscence throbbing around him in the dark

The homosexual young men and the love-mad girls,
and the lone widows who suffer from a delirious inability to sleep,
and the young wives who have been pregnant for thirty hours,
and the hoarse cats that cross my garden in the dark. . . .

under the elegant coconut palms, near the sea and the moon,
there is a steady movement of trousers and petticoats,
and a hum from the stroking of silk stockings,
and womens' breasts sparkling like eyes.

Cesar Vallejo's poems were squeezed from him like blood-red wine under a press. An Indian, with some of the old Goya's soul, he led himself into vituperation and disaster; life met him more than halfway and destroyed him, too early. John Knoepfle, one of the able translators, is dead right when he says of Vallejo: "He whimpers, he denounces, he poses, he sees through himself, he ruminates; he does all the unimaginable things that everyone does." And many not so unimaginable, and out of that wretched existence this half-demon, half primitive-Christian wrote the wonderful blasphemies of "The Eternal Dice," "The Weary Circles" and "Have You Anything to Say in your Defense?" ("Well, on the day I was born,/ God was sick.") Of his father he wrote, "If anything bitter is in him, I must be the bitterness . . . if anything distant is in him, I must be the distance." And of his mother:

And she walks firmly through the color yellow to cry, because I seem to her to be getting old, on the blade of the sword, in the delta of my face. Weeps with me, grows sad with me. Why should my youth be necessary, if I will always be her son? Why do moth-

ers feel pain when their sons get old, if their age will never equal anyway the age of the mothers? And why, if the sons, the more they get on, merely come nearer to the age of the fathers? My mother cries because I am old in my time and because I will never get old enough to be old in hers!

Vallejo was an original, no question of it: a living grimace. . . . And the translation project of the Seventies Press supervised by Mr. Bly is unarguably an ambitious and welcome enterprise. I simply feel that the nature of Mr. Bly's partisanship is prejudicial to his best interests.

If Stephen Sandy is as young as he looks in the picture on the jacket of his book,⁷ he is in every way an encouraging exception among those of his generation, whether or not they write poetry! Few have the grace to be so self-effacing. Few, of those who do write poetry, have the tact (or the character) to recognize that their own egos are not very interesting and may never be. Meanwhile, there are other worlds. Sandy obviously has no wish, by the evidence of his poems, to be someone else, someone more Dionysian, ravaged by nameless (or even named) vices! He appears to know who he is and what the function of poetry is—for him: *to observe*, reflect, transfigure the beauty or the incongruity he has discovered. The principal geographical subject of this slim, distinguished volume is Japan: the visible Japan of our film-conditioned acquaintance and our shared combat—and the invisible Japan, since the enigma of any foreigner's behaviour must have derived from invisible forces. Sandy's Oriental scene is handled discreetly, in the Oriental way, but with the privileged perspective of the Westerner. The poems are distilled to a purity of form which itself celebrates the Japanese graphic art—ordered chaos in a bamboo room. They enshrine, through a qualified euphemism, those aspects of Japanese existence which it is permanently impossible for Westerners to tolerate; they confirm the best prose chronicles we have read on this incredible subject, those by, for instance, Arthur Koestler, D. J. Enright and, most recent, a report by Robert Martin Adams sent to this Review (Summer, 1971). "Still in step, arm in arm, the Japanese/ do nothing, not even/skiing, alone." Commenting on a young bride recently incarcerated with groom and in-laws, Sandy writes:

I see you zoned on his matted floors
abandoned to a strict loving; tied
to the pruned countryside and
factory siren. . . .

Every word, irreplaceable. And in the following movement of the same poem, a splendid sequence of variations, each image is a metaphor belonging to a total scheme of metaphor: "the caged squir-

⁷ ROOFS, by Stephen Sandy. Houghton Mifflin. \$4.95.

rel spins his wheel" and a plumed rooster, plucking at the metal of his cage, stands between "kamikaze taxis" and a squadron of pre-occupied and uniformed students.

And whatever the café
 a tank glooms there, glass cell for fish, gold
 carp and black; sleek ghosts, diminished, of
 forgotten geisha hovering
 in the soft light of their floating world.
 A film of fins, erotic silks, wafts
 still water: bred thoroughly
 in fantasy; able to move, but
 where, in such rooms? . . .

There is nearly as much Japan in that beautiful compression as in a whole film of Mizoguchi. That Sandy should be more than one accomplished poet is the further surprise. Nothing in these refined and sly evocations of a scenography and a culture would lead you to expect an authority as firm when, with equally pared diction, he surveys the American occupation in the Pacific or writes what may well be the most durable item in this collection, the brilliant and wise poem, "Moving Out," where he employs a military term in order to postulate a predicament of morality. It is too long for quotation here (nothing less than its interlocked whole will do) but I am confident it will be nominated for inclusion in many future anthologies.

To follow Sandy's focused mind and opalescent eye with even a few pages by Arthur Gregor⁸ is to recognize, with quick dismay, that here is a poet who has looked at everything and seen nothing. If Gregor were an American, one might tabulate his evasive idealism as a casualty of transcendentalism. He is not; his base seems to be America, now, but he's a Central European with an acquired (or perhaps inborn) will to exile that fatally affects the substance of his writing. He never looks closely at the visible character of anything lest it threaten his Saroyanesque slogans—"Everything alive is sensitive" and Love resolves all. If you don't note the thingness of anything, it is much easier to claim that you love everything. When Gregor writes of "A Single Flower of the Field" or of "A Tree Unlike Others," it is characteristic of him not to name that flower or tree or—what is important—to *embody* it. The poet-protagonist of his "Dichterliebe" is pictured in this succession: "On his knees at the edge of a sea/ distance of which/ his every sense partakes/ he is taken/ to a luster behind the world's eye,/ to façades that elude/ the minds of architects." After you've read a few score of Gregor's poems it is no startling news to learn that his "every sense" is enlisted to evoke the *insensible*. The luster is always somewhere else

* **SELECTED POEMS**, by *Arthur Gregor*. Doubleday & Co. \$6.95.

and God forbid he would dwell on façades that had *not* eluded the minds of architects! In "Letter to Mexico" he finally recognizes the existence of the place in his final "stanza," after a long abstract detour which is really the poem, then delivers a statement, nominally about the market in San Miguel, which none of us would value as publishable prose. His "Dubrovnik" is a fatal example of how he proceeds from the colossally banal to a presumed ineffable:

What touched me about Dubrovnik
was so simple, so human:
an airline attendant going out of his way
to find me a telephone directory

.....

these stretches and slopes by the sea
where man is so at home
as if his surroundings
were nowhere

 but inside him—
he the drawbridge
giving passage to
a long line of figures and boats.

A momentary, commendable effort, then "A long line of figures and boats." Since Herman Hesse, has there been a more slack sensibility in poetry? To compare Gregor's "Dubrovnik" with a poem of the same title by Ivan Lalic is to convince yourself, if conviction hadn't settled on you earlier, that if a man can't even begin to determine what Gregor calls "the ardor in visible objects" he is not a poet at all. One begins Gregors book wanting to like it; the poet is gentle, unruffled; he exudes a limp good will. After a hundred or so pages of this prosaic nebulosity, you feel like screaming: "'Platonism and the Everyday Life' were never like this! Damn it, *things exist!*"

Jean Garrigue is a kind of female Gregor, stunned by the task of rendering on the page what her mind tells her she ought to be seeing.⁹ "Chartres" was an assignment given her by an art publication editor, c. 1957. How she fulfilled it is evident. She "boned up," naturally enough, on the available literature; by the time she had organized her studies she no longer knew what her emotion about the cathedral had originally been. The result is a documented swoon in which the building, Chartres, disappears behind a catalogue of its religious iconology. We could have as reliably undertaken this research for ourselves, in the pages of Emil Male, Henri Focillon or Andre Malraux. Thirteen years thereafter—this says something about publishing in the United States—she is invited to reprint this piece as if it were a definitive eulogy. Baffling it is, further, to note how many critics allude to Miss Garrigue's "fabulous prose":

⁹ CHARTRES AND PROSE POEMS, by Jean Garrigue. Eakins Press. \$4.95.

neither fabulous nor model prose—simply euphemism doing the work of imagination, an impressionistic version of something her eye passed over with no corresponding feeling for its value. She has not the gift of making an object more seeable by someone else. From plastic art she should certainly keep her distance (well, *she does!*); the Brueghel exercise (on *The Triumph of Death*) conclusively declares that. She never sees the picture as a *painting*, only as an action; and still she fails to rise to a definition of the spectacle depicted. She recounts every square inch of the canvas as *event*, an inventory we can easily take without her aid. W. H. Auden wrote a poem on Brueghel's *The Fall of Icarus*; without attempting to rival either the painter or an art historian, he framed in fewer than a dozen lines, if I recall, an indelible summary of what certain Old Masters were saying about life. He made a *poem* (not a prose pastiche) and he returned us to the painting. Miss Garrigue refuses to ask questions of the view before which she is willing herself into a trance. With "Amsterdam" she never arrives in the place, she is stopped by clouds; she could as plausibly have called the sketch (*none* of these is a formal poem) "Bruges"—or "Schenectady"! "L'Envoi" is a chaotic climax to her obscurity in the prose-poetry fashion. The "You" invoked is never identified and the claim to writing poetic prose is presumably enforced by an expressionist sentence of some twenty-five lines with a buried predicate, of which this is an extract (it would not help sense if I added the beginning and end):

"... you who out of the such-said properties given but wreathed anew by the fishtails of tritons, by the arabesques of the grapevine knotted, make structures more tense, more essential than the estrangements we stagger through, trembling at the wrong time. too frozen at others, mutes incapable in a world dying to touch of the touch of the quick, disordered by the false counters, preoccupied by the subservient desire to live, to hold our heads up under the wronged air of fall-out. . . .

One last quotation—from the cover of the book. "This spring she is teaching creative writing at Princeton University."

As we know by now, there is an authentic crisis in the development of a certain kind of poet when the apprehensions of the lordly mind are too swiftly fused as language by the eye and ear; in such cases, the poet alone can divine what he in fact intended. Criticism has been over-anxious in our time to attribute such a crisis to what is frequently pure gush or an affectation of the sacred inexpressible. John Hollander¹⁰ and Jon Silkin¹¹ are both undergoing transitions that either warp their language or leave them incommunicable at a point where we should most like to feel we have not been mistaking

¹⁰ THE NIGHT MIRROR, by John Hollander. Atheneum. \$3.95.

¹¹ AMANA GRASS, by Jon Silkin. Wesleyan University. \$4.75.

their drift. Both are admirable poets and are worth the difficulty of following with sometimes incomplete clues. Hollander's spirited translations from Moishe Halpern and Mani Lieb, as well as his delightful fancy, "Poem of Pooballs," read as if he enjoyed language and trusted it because he can extend its range of meaning without elaborating the vocabulary. In other, more personal poems, tinged by extreme desolation, he writes as if he were translating someone else's mannerisms—sometimes Hart Crane's, sometimes those of Dylan Thomas—without experiencing the rustle of tragedy which his translations cleverly echo. Since I don't know the chronology of his composition, I can only infer that these poems were earlier, but throughout the book there is evidence that he is yet unaware of an idiosyncrasy which no poet, fully working in his own right, could ignore. He has an obsessive fondness for the negative prefix: *unpromised*, *unbroken*, *uncomprehended*, *unminding*, *unlocked*, *unlatched*, *unresponsive*, *unshining*, *unfailing*, *uninventive*, *undying*, *unbelieving* and *unmapped*. These Faulknerian (or Thomasian?) signatures seriously distract one from his otherwise resourceful voice and his skilled sense of intervals. They divert one from the force of a concern he shares with William Dickey and many other American poets, that same sense of wilderness, which is nowhere more acutely felt than among city habitations, swarming and ephemeral. Hollander has a wider scope than Dickey when expressing this sense ("The Curse," "Power Failure," "The Dark Museum," "Evening Wolves"); he has so far less authority because, ambitious to write *poems*, he is fearlessly oblique. Neither has he the intellectual nuances of James Merrill to make the obliquity altogether fascinating. Nonetheless, he is an extraordinary poet at his best. "White Noises," "Under Capricorn," "Fireflies" and "As Sparks Fly Upward" steady our shaking desire to believe that he is on the verge of writing an impressive landscape poetry, pregnant with voices from the margin of the unseen.

Jon Silkin, discontented with the dry, witty perfection he had achieved in his natural history fables, is breaking new ground for himself, moving far afield to gather evidence more human of his implicit subject, the survival of the fittest. Iowa cemeteries, Newcastle docks and the deserts of Israel are a few of the settings in which his now broader interests are situated. Already, in "Flatfish," one of his richest poems, he was extending his metaphor, adding cadenzas, lengthening the lines and varying his measures, moving outward from the taciturn speech of "Worms" and "Creatures." New directions are transforming his poetry into a medium not yet freer but more elaborated and gregarious. He runs the risk of becoming didactic at the expense of poetic feeling and tempo. For some of his new ventures he adopts a monotonous scheme: looping statements together in a strict succession of subject-predicate. In "Jaffa, and

Other Places" and "Reclaimed Area," gritty and emphatic, he is too heavily doing what he did before with a smile, suiting the word to the action, the sound to the process illustrated.

Toward Jaffa, foot-dragged sand is flattened, and pathed, the hardened grains

fusing them to a road, on which the fallen foot stifles.

Houses shake

into dereliction.

A flat incohering of sand with brick, remaining feet above, stays.

A gully cuts through these, levels down, sprains its sides, between which pours brick, charred wood, tarpaulin, stopped.

And so on, really quite inhibiting. One respects the inner demand that bids Silkin externalize in other directions than heretofore. The impulse courts disaster if he too literally follows the Marxist text he places at the front of his work—"the bringing about of certain changes in the social consciousness is political activity." This is even arguable as a definition. In any case, changes have been radically brought about. Now we reap the whirlwind. Silkin must modify his consciousness in his own way, of course, and in his Palestine poems he does submerge himself in the milieu with unbelievable empathy. However, he pays for the effort; his language fails him, knots, groans, begins to sound like MacDiarmid at his crankiest. If Silkin is sufficiently flexible he may survive this passage to acquire a new clarity with another texture. For the time being, the old clarity is his purest claim on poetry.

At a given moment of saturation by manufactured poetic anxiety and laborious efforts to violate language in order to wring response from it, the presence of J. V. Cunningham¹² is an immense relief. "For My Contemporaries" formulates in sixteen short graceful lines the crux I have been earlier striving to point out:

How time reverses

The proud in heart!

I now make verses

Who aimed at art.

But I sleep well.

Ambitious boys

Whose big lines swell

With spiritual noise,

Despise me not,

And be not queasy

To praise somewhat:

Verse is not easy.

¹² THE COLLECTED POEMS AND EPIGRAMS OF J. V. CUNNINGHAM. Swallow Press. \$7.50.

But rage who will.
 Time that procured me
 Good sense and skill
 Of madness cured me.

I daresay that many of the newest generation will not allow Cunningham's traditional verse to be poetry at all, since it repudiates every sound and fury by which alone they recognize poetry—and of madness they *don't want* to be cured! But "while this America settles in the mould of its vulgarity, heavily thickening toward empire"¹³ and Norman Mailer slouches towards Bethlehem to be born, we have dire need of someone who speaks for sanity and decorum (Cunningham is not *hopelessly* decorous!) and prosecutes with decisive wit some prevailing complacencies of modernism and certain indiscretions which have taken place in the history of ideas.

Plato! you shall not plague my life.
 I married a terrestrial wife.
 And Hume! she is not mere sensation
 In sequence of observed relation.
 She has two forms—ah, thank you, Duns!—,
 I know her in both ways at once.
 I knew her, yes, before I knew her,
 And by both means I must construe her,
 And none among you shall undo her.

And from "The True Religion," a canard for the over-eager Freudian:

....
 In brief, the Convert is a Case.
 He puts away all else to face
 Reality with the paralysis
 Of a seven year depth analysis.
 He does not see but he is heard.
 He is transferred and untransferred.
 He has aggressions and no malice,
 And phallic symbols and no phallus.

Even these quotes pin Cunningham down too succinctly, for in his collected poems—their paucity is a tribute to the courage with which he must have sacrificed many peccable lines—there are also dark reminiscences of waste places (the Montana poems), odes in the Latin or Metaphysical manner, personal lyrics of singular, compassionate irony (the entire sequence, "To What Strangers, What Welcome," is remarkably versatile in mood, form and accent), and ferocious little parodies that burn the skin. Everywhere he is erudite with ease, euphonic without fortissimo, conservative without foregoing

¹³ Robinson Jeffers.

the particular impish (indeed waspish) note that only existence in our swift-declining, vociferous century can supply. The book includes a hundred *Epigrams*. Not all of these are scintillating and wise but the number of pertinent and elegant occasions is high. They comprise good pedagogic counsel, consolations for mortality and pure fun.

Within this mindless vault
Lie Tristan and Isolt
Tranced in each other's beauties.
They had no other duties.

Which introduces us to Anne Sexton's territory, in her new volume at least. I'm relieved not to have to cope with her customary war on her own gender. In *Transformations*,¹⁴ while her impatience with biology as destiny remains, she pursues another beast. She undermines the fairy tale with deadly address and a merciless employment of city-American idioms: occasionally vulgar, often brilliant, nearly always hilarious, to my cruel mind! She is no Thurber; the elegant master-spook of the graphic and English arts was a True Believer. His versions of Grimm or Andersen, however salty, set out to rival the originals; his ear was in thrall to Lewis Carroll and his wit, in this area, was less clinical than linguistic. Anne Sexton is out to *get* the brothers Grimm, armed with illuminations supplied by Freud but as much by the wised-up modern's experience of having been victimized by grandmother and re-captured by the pragmatic test. In such endeavors, tone is everything. Here's how she launches "Cinderella":

You always read about it:
the plumber with twelve children
who wins the Irish Sweepstakes.
From toilets to riches.
That story.

Or the nursemaid,
some luscious sweet from Denmark
who captures the oldest son's heart.
From diapers to Door.
That story.

And here's how she ends the tale:

Cinderella and the prince
lived, they say, happily ever after,
like two dolls in a museum case
never bothered by diapers or dust,
never arguing over the timing of an egg,

¹⁴ TRANSFORMATIONS, by Anne Sexton. Houghton Mifflin. \$5.00.

never telling the same story twice,
 never getting a middle-aged spread,
 their darling smiles pasted on for eternity.
 That story.

Corner-of-the-mouth stuff? ideal for reading aloud to friends or to guests who won't thaw? But there are other passages where, sustained by her fine art of inflection and an uncanny choice of impertinent simile, she achieves a truly diabolical lyricism: in "Hansel and Gretel," in "One-Eye, Two Eyes, Three Eyes," in "The Sleeping Beauty" (where Briar Rose audibly becomes Electra) and in "Rapunzel," from which this romping stanza:

....

Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair,
 and thus they met and he declared his love.
 What is this beast, she thought,
 with muscles on his arms
 like a bag of snakes?
 What is this moss on his legs?
 What prickly plant grows on his cheeks?
 What is this voice as deep as a dog?
 Yet he dazzled her with his answers.
 Yet he dazzled her with his dancing stick.
 They lay together upon the yellowy threads,
 swimming through them
 like minnows through kelp
 and they sang out benedictions like the Pope.

The drawings of Barbara Swan incisively complement the poems. Their designs are what they should be: importunate and macabre; Gothic and placental.

I might say that the most original (i.e. self-sufficing, not *novel*) poet I have to review here is Frederick Nicklaus¹⁵ and I intend it as a high compliment when I say that his poems, read without his biography or a timetable, defy attempts to date them—save that they include memorials to Rilke and Modigliani—and reveal almost nothing about their author: his age, his attachments, his national origin. This is not to say they lack personality; far from it. Their personality is intrinsic, seemingly an impersonal consequence of image and composition perfectly coordinated (by dread!), relating strictly to the content they yield (more importantly, suggesting a content not wholly yielded) but independent of any author you can infer. I can best justify this dubious introduction by directly quoting one of his eeriest poems, "Making the Rounds."

¹⁵ CUT OF NOON, by *Frederick Nicklaus*. David Lewis. \$5.00.

Peering down stairwells, opening closet doors,
 right hand at holster level,
 making the rounds,
 he is part of each day, accepted
 like the filing case, this typewriter, the floor's
 familiar loose tile.
 Do not see him, accept him as the sole
 meets the pavement, and the file
 receives the letter in the endless toll.
 The shadow in the stairwell, the closet's noose
 do not exist. He is just
 making the rounds,
 facing the well.
 His plumb stare
 sounds all the emptiness in hell.

Vivid, yet reticent; above all, disquieting, Nicklaus' poems should be named classical and surreal at the same time. (Such terms are but half instructive!) I mean that their very anonymity is a classical feature; classical also, their precision of word and their formal clarity. They are often surreal if a special reading of that class is allowed; they do *not* represent the illogical placement of logical objects; they do not contain disparate elements for purposes of shock. Placement, of person or object, is logical enough but usually another dimension of meaning is implied which you seldom realize before the whole poem has been formed. René Magritte once painted a cliff-face—just a cliff-face, no umber shadows, no sfumato; full plastic relief—with such definition that looking at it you feel your scalp prickling. I still don't know how he did it. That's what Nicklaus does. His subject: Presences Unseen. Unlike Dickey, he finds no comforting stay in the hours of daylight. In fact, a large part of the terror he conveys comes from the very luminosity of his landscapes, Mediterranean or burnished desert, which conceals or induces edgy tokens of anxiety:

Your fear swells with the lizard's throat,
 makes traps of rope from a garden hose,
 tastes poison in salt at the rim of the glass,
 venom in the tail of an eye. . . .

[from "Cut of Noon"]

Ghosts at Noon would have been a good overall title if it had not already done duty for a novelist. The concretely given scene, the deliberation with which a poem advances, the unambiguous phrasing: these are suddenly, quietly imperilled by a portent breathing over the shoulder, as in Antonioni's film, *L'Avventura*. Nicklaus' most explicit poem, certainly his most harrowing, and I apologize for having to mar its splended progression with ellipses, is one in which

Modigliani is dying in a cold room ("the last of many. January rain/ strikes the streets. The wine shops are shuttered"), haunted by all those nudes, "their blank eyes negating their flesh/ that glows with tones of Tuscan earth. . . ."

Once I walked in circles of fire
But even then the warmth of flesh, its contours
guiding my brush, my hands, enclosing my sex,
ended in the gray opacity of their eyes.

. . . .

I am nothing but gray flesh, and a cough that nears
its end.
Now I am alone with them all. They push you away
from me,
surround my bed. I cannot breathe, yet they lower
over me.
And there is no light, none, in the awful opacity of
their eyes.

ROBERT MARTIN ADAMS

Extension and Intention¹

Reviewing books written by your friends is probably a corrupt procedure, but it's self-limiting; after a few such reviews, chances are you won't have any more friends. Still, if the crime is going to be done, it might as well be done boldly and in the light of day. Reader, beware: whether of malice or of favoritism, I'm not sure, but beware anyway.

PROFESSOR ABRAMS of Cornell University (there's a story that he and Morris Bishop, between them, *are* Cornell University, but that's a patent exaggeration) takes his scholarship straight. He doesn't administrate at all, he doesn't review very much, he doesn't take part in academic log-rolling, he doesn't issue public statements on cosmic issues. He is a scholar: he thinks. One of Doctor Johnson's acquaintance reported that he too had tried to be a philosopher, like the doctor, but found it wouldn't do, as cheerfulness kept breaking in. More fortunate than this man with his paradoxical complaint, Professor Abrams is of an azure and composed disposition; he manages to think and maintain his serenity at the same time, in a manner that is the admiration and sometimes the amazement of his contemporaries. His mind is invincibly Apollonian, even though Apollo is a notorious stranger to Ithaca, New York; and as the surf of a dozen different contemporary revolutions seethes and thunders about his door, he preserves a luminous poise under leaden skies by studying quietly, steadily, and with utter dispassion, the most revolutionary and turbulent of literary ages.

The books in which his studies find embodiment are neither frequent nor flashy; they are large, slow-paced, judicious, and painstakingly worked out. *The Mirror and the Lamp*, which appeared in 1953, had grown through thirteen years of sustained work; *Natural Supernaturalism* is the final revision of a set of lectures first delivered eight years ago and meditated long before that. Scholarship has its little undramatic dramas; and one of them is surely the encounter of this patient, wide-ranging, and deeply factual mind with an enthusiastic, turbulent, unsystematic subject. The results till now have been curiously in doubt. For all its massive erudition, for all its lucid and careful prose, *The Mirror and the Lamp* has proved to be a great many things to a great many people, a book hardly less ambiguous

¹ NATURAL SUPERNATURALISM: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature, by M. H. Abrams. W. W. Norton. \$10.00. BLINDNESS & INSIGHT, Essays in the rhetoric of contemporary criticism, by Paul deMan. Oxford University. \$6.95.

and complex in its influence than the movement it charted. *Natural Supernaturalism* confronts once again an angry ocean of problems—to which it would surely be naïve to expect definitive solutions—and once again brings us, by means of a miraculously assured and confident navigation, to a quiet port which may after all be only the eye of the storm.

Is there conceivably a more difficult and challenging field of literary study than romanticism as it has to be seen from the perspective of 1971? The word itself can hardly be pronounced any more without a sense of irony. For fifty years and more scandal has been crying in the public streets that nobody knows what “romanticism” really means; it has been used and misused in different senses under different circumstances, often by the same author, and has accumulated thus a cocoon of different meanings and contradictory connotations. Yet it’s a surpassingly sticky word; one can’t get rid of it. All sorts of people and movements have set out, over the last century or so, to emancipate themselves from romanticism—and then found themselves, in the name of anti-romanticism, assuming familiar, identifiable romantic positions. (Scratch an anti-romantic, it might be said, and you’ll find a neo-romantic.) Finally, the discussion of the subject has been complicated by all sorts of social circumstances and critical doctrines. There is a school of thought which identifies romanticism with out-and-out primitivism, another which sees it as a cult of sensation culminating in the decadent “last romantics” of the *fin-de-siècle*, and a way of combining both these views which represents the Third Reich as the natural, inevitable conclusion of the romantic cults of ego-assertion, blood-thinking, and death-wish. The continuity of romanticism with symbolism and post-symbolism has been affirmed and denied, on many different grounds; its roots have been sought in a dozen different movements, philosophical, religious, social, and political, which have all been represented, at various times, as its direct antithesis. Meanwhile, the literary merits of the romantic writers have rocketed up and down the literary exchange like the stocks of wildcat oil companies. After a long depression under the bearish influence of Eliot and the new criticism, Shelley has rallied recently; until lately, trading in Wordsworth could best be described as “sluggish”; while Keats and Byron have proved good, steady investments over the years, and Blake has been the big winner. If all the romantic controversies were just over matters of this nature, such as contribute to the excitement of horse-racing, we might cheerfully dismiss them. But in fact the writers known as “romantics” were clearly responsible for major new definitions, not only of taste, but of psychology; they made evident the mind’s power to structure experience, as well as to absorb or reflect it. Their very influence contributed to the confusion in our understanding of them. The sensibility they created is that by which we try to see and assess

them. This recurrent attempt has given rise to a thousand rip-tides of claim and blame, through which Professor Abrams here undertakes to steer under the aegis of a mighty motto from Hegel:

Das Bekannte überhaupt ist darum, weil es bekannt ist, nicht erkannt. What we know, for the very reason that it's familiar, we don't perceive.

In thus promising a review and reassessment of what men have thought they knew about romanticism, the new book undertakes an epic pacification, and its scope is proportionate. Yet, though it's immense both physically and intellectually, the limits of *Natural Supernaturalism* are specific and quite important, since they contribute, almost too generously, to the book's thesis. Professor Abrams is interested primarily in the visionary, apocalyptic romantics—those (like Wordsworth, Blake, Shelley, Hölderlin, Schiller, and Schelling) who shared messianic, chiliastic expectations of a regenerate human race. These expectations, derived primarily from the Bible (Isaiah, Revelations, Daniel), and stirred by radical protestant interpretations, were fanned by the winds of the French Revolution but damped by the reaction against it, and so transformed into an inner quest for contemplative perfection, a purified self-understanding. Natural supernaturalism is in effect a body of supernatural expectations reworked and transferred to the circumstances of this world and specifically of the psyche forced to find its own salvation in isolation both from the other world and from the practical affairs of this one.

This is the theme that Professor Abrams finds to be primary in the Romantic movement, and that his book is devoted to exploring; and there's no doubt whatever that it's a major theme. But there are regions of the romantic mind to which it does not extend. At the very beginning, the author is obliged to dismiss Byron from his purview "because in his greatest work he speaks with an ironic counter-voice." This is true; hardly anyone could be less apocalyptic or messianic than the Byron of *Don Juan*. Perhaps the fact that he knew something about the practical workings of revolution, and was the only English romantic poet to stick by his revolutionary guns for any length of time, had something to do with it. But in any case, it's striking that a man famous throughout Europe during his lifetime as the arch-romantic poet, should cut no figure at all in a book about romanticism. And as we rummage about the edges of the book, we find that indeed the visionary company does not correspond with a list of those authors who have been thought, traditionally, to belong among the spokesmen of "romanticism." Only a little bit of Keats gets in—not at all through the great odes or the sonnets, but through "Sleep and Poetry" and the two "Hyperions," because they describe the growth of a poet's mind. There was a rather vigorous strain of anti-romantic romantics, among whom we

might list Stendhal, Heine, Pushkin, and Leopardi, who have been eliminated from the book without a trace, evidently on the same principle as Byron, their prototype. Even Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who has generally been accorded a certain place in the history of romanticism, does not figure largely here. Nor should he; in discussions of the apocalypse, as Wordsworth and Blake envisaged it, his voice would not be loud. Gautier and Hugo, the two greatest of the French romantics, are similarly absent from the party; and so are Scott, Manzoni, Chateaubriand, Nerval, Richter, Constant. . . . I don't run off the list with the implication that Professor Abrams should have extended his book to include all these several figures. But before we accept the thesis that apocalyptic vision was the primary theme of the romantic movement, it behooves us to see how many, and what significant figures, the schema invites us to relegate to peripheral positions.

There is an obverse side to the problem. The themes and topics that Professor Abrams proposes as characteristic of his visionary company of core-romantics are indeed to be found, repeatedly and in intricate combination, in their works. Such themes as the lost paradise, the New Jerusalem, the return to innocence, the spiritual marriage, the inspirational effects of landscape, and the temporal moment of special insight are very frequent among the visionary romantics. But they are found elsewhere too, in authors whom nobody ever associated with romanticism. Professor Abrams himself shows that many of them are among the great perennial themes of Western culture. What is common to Saint Augustine, Virgil, Apuleius, Dante, Geoffrey Chaucer, Swift, Monsieur Voltaire, and Mother Goose can hardly be, in itself, the distinguishing feature of romanticism. And of course *Natural Supernaturalism* doesn't propose that the themes, in themselves, are distinctive; it is the way in which they are defined and combined, the literary uses to which they are put. In fact, it's Professor Abrams' detailed discussions of individual texts, rather than his intellectual history (which, under the impulsion to make us perceive what's already familiar, really does labor some of the commonplaces almost to exhaustion) that best display the quality of his mind. He devotes most care to the central case of Wordsworth, as elaborately documented in early versions of *The Prelude*. There are new manuscript materials here, requiring new interpretation; the whole perspective of Wordsworth's intellectual development is laid out fully and clearly, with an assured grasp of its dynamics and shadings of perception. No literary art, it is to be feared, will ever render Wordsworth an *appealing* poet when he is sitting in solemn judgment on his own spiritual development; but his self-analysis, as it involves an intricate interweaving of rationalization and instinct, has its own sort of sustained interest. I find myself following it between horror and fascination, as the Ancient Mariner gazed on the water-

snakes. Another remarkable achievement of the new book is an account of Hegel's *Phenomenology* which seemed to this unphilosophic reader not only an enlightening introduction to the formidable volume itself but a skilful alignment of it with other manifestations of spiritual autobiography. Discussions of Blake, Shelley, Coleridge, Schelling, Schiller, and Hölderlin involve more traditional materials and work them less intensively; yet even the familiar, under careful scrutiny, reveals new facets and invites one to draw revealing parallels. When he's close to a piece of literature, Professor Abrams can balance and reconcile, while steering clear of simplistic formulas, in an altogether wonderful way. The book into which all these themes are woven is elaborately constructed, perhaps over-constructed; as the elements cross and entwine, they necessarily recur; and one sometimes has the sense that Wordsworth's poetic program, as enunciated in *The Prelude*, is interminable, inescapable, obsessive. *Natural Supernaturalism* is a massive piece of marmoreal exposition; before its inexorable progression, one feels like Hegel before the Alps, murmuring under his breath, "Es ist so."

"Es ist so"—no doubt about it; as a study of one major strain running through early romantic thought and animating at least some major figures during that period of its development, *Natural Supernaturalism* will remain a landmark of scholarship for a long time to come. And yet one can't help feeling that this mighty monolith stands a little skew on its foundations. In a full study of the way radical-Protestant messianic expectations were adapted to secular ends, interiorized toward the purification of the individual will, and turned into a kind of eclectic esotericism or dilute Buddhism (such as appealed notably to Yeats), one would want to reflect light from figures like Emerson and Amiel, Comte and Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard—to mention no others. If, on the other hand, one's focus were squarely on romanticism, it's possible that one would get a more representative view by not defining the movement in terms of subject-matter at all. What Professor Abrams calls suggestively "Apocalypse by Cognition" grows, as it seems to me, out of a critique of the mind's capacity to know and an awareness of the structures inherent in the acts of knowing and articulating, which spreads pervasively through romantic literature under the overt metaphors of reflection (as in mirrors, as in meditations), echoes, split personalities, shadows, masks, and that multitude of invented, often fragmentary images of the self which Byron and Gautier projected, no less than Wordsworth and Blake. Romantics were distinctive in attempting to define the individual mind against the limits of what it could become, or envisage itself becoming; earlier generations had been accustomed to define the individual mind against the accumulated social wisdom of the community.

Essentially, Professor Abrams represents romanticism as spilt re-

ligion, and that's what, in the authors on whom he has chosen to concentrate, it was. There is another view, no less capable of being oversimplified, according to which it's a process of seeing first the world in terms of oneself, then oneself in terms of oneself, and finally through oneself. The redeeming, the ultimate vision can be reached in an astonishing variety of ways. It can be reached through an inward quest but also through a negative "dying to oneself;" by projecting oneself and one's feelings onto receptive nature, but also by being stunned and defeated by nature into an awareness of what is written on one's inmost soul; by putting off the conscious mind and retreating imaginatively to childhood or savagery; by wisdom or innocence, by depletion, immolation, perversity, or annihilation. At one stage, among English and German poets primarily, messianic quest was a major metaphor of romantic aspiration—for a while, it was one of several channels, it was never the mainstream itself. Or so this recalcitrant reviewer would argue.

One difficulty in discussing and defining romanticism has always been the sheer multiplicity of the examples. When we start to define, a great deal depends on the genres from which we select these examples. In English literature, it is instinctive to think of "the romantic poets," hardly possible to think of "the romantic novelists," "the romantic painters," or the "romantic dramatists." In other cultures, no such pressures exist, or they take different forms. Even in English, Scott and the Brontës *are* romantic novelists, as I suppose Balzac, George Sand, and Stendhal (as qualified) are in French. Schiller and Hugo are romantic dramatists; and when we try to distinguish Berlioz from Mozart and Delacroix from David, we have no other word for them than "romantic." We've adopted the word "romantic" to express so many characteristic differences (the quality of which we can all feel, even though we can't always formulate it) that no one rubric involving subject matter, not even messianic regeneration, will accommodate all these eels in a single basket.

Comprehensiveness is the supreme quality of Professor Abrams' mind; his gift lies in seeing all the elements of a problem and composing them toward a judicious and inclusive picture. It's such an extraordinary talent, and so little cultivated elsewhere these days, that one sounds ungrateful in suggesting that it implies a corresponding weakness. That weakness, as I see it, is for summary statements so broad and comprehensive as to verge on the meaningless. When, toward the end of this really noble book, Professor Abrams sets himself the task of defining formally romanticism and the "romantic positives," he comes down on the side of five qualities so sweeping and indefinite that only extraordinary diligence could discover a member of the human race unwilling to subscribe to all of them. "Life, love, liberty, hope, and joy"—well, really, the only things missing here are motherhood, apple pie, and the American

flag. Is *this* why we read Novalis and Hölderlin, are these the themes of young Werther, Saint-Preux, Childe Harold, Endymion? Where did Poe and Hoffman come from, and how did they get mixed up with this group of enthusiastic life-forcers? If it didn't sound like a recipe for instant indigestion, one would recommend for perusal alongside *Natural Supernaturalism* Professor Praz's equally distinguished and oppositely skewed volume, *The Romantic Agony*. What we need, in other words, is a soupçon of necrophily, a shade of diabolism, masochism, and suicide—a touch of that unnatural which, at least as much as the natural and the supernatural, makes the whole world kin.

*

As befits a philosopher, Professor deMan grinds slow but exceeding fine. The present volume is, I believe, his first—his first to be published in this country, at any rate—at least the first that's completely his. There's been a little collection of Keats's poems with an incisive introduction, a student's edition of *Madame Bovary* with apparatus. In other languages, I'm not sure what-all there's been—a translation into French of Rilke's poetry sticks in mind, and perhaps other projects as well. There have been *conférences*, *séances*, *réunions* galore. And there are major undertakings which have got stuck in the fine mesh of deMan's perfectionism, including a major study of Yeats, Mallarmé, and Stefan George, which I hope isn't beyond retrieval. But *Blindness and Insight* is the first full-scale, hardcover publication. It is short, glitteringly theoretical, and consists entirely of occasional papers. Though it will never be widely read, I think it's likely to go down as one of the most influential critical books of our time.

The quality of Professor deMan's devious Belgian mind is best suggested by his fascination with the intricate, restrainedly brutal patterns of international soccer, and his subterranean reputation as one of the truly vicious players of dirty croquet. Some of his reviews have been compared, in their slow, inexorable operation, to the strategies of a boa-constrictor; he is appallingly consecutive. And in fact if Professor Abrams is only to be figured as an upstate Apollo, glowing cheerily in the Aleutian climate of Ithaca, Professor deMan is, mythologically, Python, a winding, indirect, and iridescent mind, with an astonishing capacity for investing and compressing a problem. Fortunately, there's been no archery between the two of them.

Blindness and Insight is about the conditions of literary language; it's characteristically indirect in approaching this problem exclusively through *critics*, taking their criticism as itself a form of literary language. After a couple of preliminary exercises, the book comes to the heart of its argument in successive analyses of the criticism of

Georg Lukács, Maurice Blanchot, Georges Poulet, and Jacques Derrida. Two concluding essays have to do with the curious and difficult conception of "modernity." They look discrete, but aren't.

What approximately is the thrust of these elaborately dialectical and formidably abstract arguments? A welcome passage of summary at the beginning of the seventh essay (that on Rousseau and Derrida) puts it directly. Within each of the critics (or schools of criticism) analyzed, there is to be discovered a counter-statement, a contradiction not explicit enough to be dialectical—yet constituting a moment of contrary insight at precisely the point of the critics's most obvious methodological blindness. "To write critically about critics thus becomes a way to reflect on the paradoxical effectiveness of a blinded vision that has to be rectified by means of insights that it unwittingly provides (p. 106)."

The complications of this theoretical position can be illustrated from the essay in which this sentence occurs. Rousseau, though he has generally been understood as asserting in his *Essai sur l'origine des langues* the primacy, and superior authenticity of voice and presence over written, literary language, can be shown in the very act of writing and in his very account of the origins of language (which he derives from the passions) to say directly the contrary. Figural language is the offspring of the passions, which create the occasion of their own feeling; it is imaginative, non-referential speech. Rousseau, in writing a literary fiction about the development of language, illustrates even as he describes its non-referential character. Derrida, in telling his own pseudo-historical story of the relation between written and spoken language, oversimplifies Rousseau "dramatically," and in the process of exposing Rousseau's "blindness" points up those elements by which his own imperception can be corrected. Both use language in the same misleading way; Rousseau is aware of what he's doing and Derrida may be; but the more important thing is that both are committed by their rhetoric to say one thing and mean another.

In all this discussion of "blindness," it should be understood that the term doesn't have any direct value-connnotations; on the contrary, an element of blindness is understood to be a constitutive component of literary language. The blindness of the critics to the full dimensions of their response to the work is, apparently, what enables them to transcend their own ideologies. This point is enlarged in the last two essays, devoted to the difficult concept of "modernity," and the special varieties of self-consciousness and self-unconsciousness that it entails. Professor deMan concentrates on the complex task of the historian of modernism, who attempts to define this attitude and trace its roots in the past. Such a genetic definition of the task, our critic concludes with unsurprising acerbity, generally results in a much simplified view of both past and present—a denial

of the intricate, often violent acts of remembering and forgetting that are involved in modernism—not to speak of that complex relation between blindness and insight that characterizes literary language in general, “ancient” as well as “modern.” Perhaps the fact that he is dealing with an unduly assured collection of German critics lends edge, in these last pages, to Professor deMan’s polemical tone. In any event, the grace and assured fluidity with which he unfolds a couple of Mallarmé images, in the course of mincemeating Professor Stierle, make one impatient for the full study of this poet which he’s so eminently qualified to write.

Professor deMan is a difficult and uncompromising author who’s attracted to difficult and uncompromising topics. Sometimes his difficulties are easy and obvious because they’re on the surface—there’s no problem at all in seeing that you don’t understand the passage, it’s just a matter of worrying it till you do. Then there are the much more deceitful passages that read clear and simple, and, alas, are neither. The reading of this little book demands a good deal of insight and often leads to a conviction of invincible blindness. That said, it’s a book to be meditated late and long; it will disturb our habits of sleepy reading and careless speaking about literature in hundreds of contexts beyond those to which it immediately refers.

Being so devoted to uncovering blindness in other writers and so conscious of his own maneuvers in doing so, Professor deMan must have contemplated that somebody would turn his own method on him, and analyze his style for its moments of creative blindness, the self-destructive discoveries it makes in spite of itself. No doubt some of the reviewers will try to work this device on *Blindness and Insight*. I’ll be interested to see what they come up with, but suspect it won’t be too startling to the author. One more mirror in a hall of mirrors doesn’t alter much. The best defence against this corrosive little book seems likely to take another line. I’d suggest that there are degrees and measures of “literary language,” and that approaches which work very well indeed on some chosen instances of literature since the French Revolution don’t necessarily work well on literature before that chosen date. With certain sorts of authors, too much insight can be a form of radical blindness: Poe has a story, “The Purloined Letter,” that makes the point. The same point is made, in the context of modern criticism, by a glance at the state of Swift-studies, which cry aloud for retrenchment; the analysts have multiplied ironies and complexities, points of view, personae, and counter-statements, to the point where the game itself is getting out of hand. It’s not the reader whose energies I’m trying to conserve, or the author to whose intent I claim privileged access of any sort; it’s the text itself, which starts crumbling under our fingers when we apply all these solvents, solutions, ultra-violet lights, and precipitates. In the case of Swift, Mr. Donoghue’s recent

severe statement is very much to the point; in a sense that starts to put a limit on deMan's use of the term "literary language," he tells us that Swift is one of the least literary of authors. That doesn't mean at all that he's without literary interest; it points to the notion that the division between literature and non-literature is gradual and intricate. As much as anywhere else, it seems to lie in the attitudes with which we approach a given piece of language. But that freedom of approach is subject to correction and redefinition depending on the quality and (so to speak) *degree* of literature that we're facing. I don't suppose anyone's going to argue this. It's just that anyone brought up in the pragmatic British tradition feels uneasy when faced with generalizations concerning "literary language"—and the more uneasy, the more impressive the generalizations are. I should think us much limited if we weren't free to approach literature in a whole spectrum of ways, a range on which the two books under review would stand near the opposite extremes. In their utterly different ways, they're both mind-benders.

One thing I won't do in this review is say which one I'd buy if I didn't have a full \$16.95 to spend on two remarkable books of literary criticism.

GUY DAVENPORT

Distant Voices

OTTO RENÉ CASTILLO (1936-1967), the Guatemalan revolutionary, grew up under a dictatorship capable of arresting and exiling a seventeen-year-old high-school student for founding a club. Exile for an American is always voluntary and thoroughly romantic. I doubt if we can even begin to conceive what it means to be arrested, beaten up, threatened, and frog-marched across a border.

We have to assume that Castillo thrived on such treatment, for the brief account of his life that serves as an introduction to *Let's Go!*¹ relates that in 1955, the second year of his banishment, he shared the Central American Poetry Prize with Roque Dalton, the "well-known poet from El Salvador." More prizes followed quickly: the Autonomia, the World Youth Festival Poetry Prize. In 1958 he was allowed back into Guatemala, given a Filadelfo Salazar scholarship to the law school of the University of Guatemala, and exiled anew.

¹ LET'S GO! / VAMONOS PATRIA A CAMINAR, by *Otto René Castillo*. Translated, and with an Introduction, by Margaret Randall. Cape Goliard Press in association with Grossman Publishers. \$4.50.

Miss Randall's introduction says at this point that, "In 1959, again in exile, he began to study letters at the University of Leipzig, Germany . . ." Now there is no address to which one may accurately append "Germany" anymore. Miss Randall means the German Democratic Republic, which is neither democratic nor a republic; and by the University of Leipzig, which no longer exists, she means the Karl Marx University at Leipzig. What the "letters" are that Castillo studied there is anybody's guess. I don't understand Miss Randall's trying suavely to disguise Castillo's Communism, or the Communist patronage of his revolutionary activities and of his poetry. True, Communist régimes are not noted for encouraging either poetry or the freedom to speak for which Castillo died so horrible a death, but she does her poet no credit by substituting liberal euphemisms for the right names of things.

Castillo returned to Guatemala the next year (one learns fast at Karl Marx U.), began a revolutionary newspaper (disguised, in the usual Communist manner, as "a student newspaper"), and founded a revolutionary theatre. Whereupon "the military dictatorship of Guatemala imprisoned and exiled Castillo again." (How can you do both?) Then off to Cuba and "Germany" again, where he acquired a wife and two children. Back in Guatemala, this time as a revolutionary soldier. He was captured in March of 1967, "tortured 4 days and finally burned alive—March 19th."

There is no reason to doubt a word of Miss Randall's life of Castillo. It rings all too true. But as it is cast in the *clichés* of revolutionary jargon, we must wait to satisfy our curiosity for an objective account.

Naked of poetic skill, except for a happy if ultimately monotonous balance of phrasing, Castillo's poetry is a voice simply. It modulates between a slit-eyed hatred of tyranny and a fervent piety before a social gospel of extensive sweetness. Still, there is in Castillo's barricade voice an innocence and anguish that lifts his poetry above the usual Leninist hymnology. His indignation can be gloriously savage, as in the poem "Report of an Injustice," where he meditates on the soul of a landlord who has evicted an elderly widow.

Miss Randall has served Castillo well in her translation, only rarely forgetting that cognates seldom translate themselves, as when she gives us "sonorous and olorous" for "*sonoro y oloroso*."

It is too soon to say what importance Castillo's poetry will assume in time. At the moment it would seem to belong to history rather than literature; but then we haven't yet seen his most recent poems. The Guatemalan government has destroyed the print shop where they were in the press.

Unlike Castillo, Octavio Paz, the Mexican poet, philosopher, anthropologist, aesthete, and critic, is one of the most distinguished men of letters in the Americas. He is presently the Charles Eliot

Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard, on sabbatical from the Simón Bolívar Chair of Latin American Literature at Cambridge.

This new collection, with translations, of his poems² is both an excellent introduction to his work as well as a kind of Festschrift by the noble array of poets who have made the translations.

Muriel Rukeyser is the presiding genius behind this book, a woman all soul who goes about her good works by knocking everything in sight cockahoop. I suppose she is far too arrived to heel to an editor's blue pencil, and apparently has no tactful friends to tell her that her introduction is as confused as a hairball from the stomach of an ox. Ungrammatical, incoherent, and frenzied, it sounds like an assessment of Paz shouted from the window of a departing train.

"This book," she begins, "is by a world-poet who, in the decade into which we are invited, has reached the consciousness of readers at an extreme depth, stretched in suffering, power, phosphorescence, eroticism." World-poet? What decade? Who invites whom, on what occasion and with what authority, into a decade? Who's stretched in suffering? Stretched in power? Stretched in phosphorescence?

But Miss Rukeyser is only taking off her gloves and spitting on her hands in this opening whoop. She goes on to say that Señor Paz holds the sea open under the cities of Europe, and feeds deep in the European tearing and fascination. *Juro, lectore, verecunde!*

Flee Miss Rukeyser's introduction and you land in her translation of Paz's masterpiece, "Sun Stone." Here she is better behaved, and has more luck. Still, she tampers with Paz, and abandons her work before she has tested it against good sense. Paz begins with the Verlainesque image of a fountain:

*un sauce de cristal, un chopo de agua,
un alto surtidor que el viento arquea,
un árbol bien plantado mas danzante . . .*

Literally, these lines mean: "A willow of glass, a black poplar tree of water, a tall fountain which the wind bends over, a tree well rooted but dancing." Miss Rukeyser translates:

*willow of crystal, a poplar of water,
a pillar of fountain by the wind drawn over,
tree that is firmly rooted and that dances . . .*

Where did she get that "pillar of fountain," which is both awkward and unidiomatic? Later on, by translating "*un caminar de río que se curva*" (river that turns back upon itself) as "turning course of a river that goes curving," she botches the image.

² CONFIGURATIONS, by Octavio Paz. Translated from the Spanish by G. Aroul, Paul Blackburn, Lysander Kemp, Denise Levertov, John Frederick Nims, Muriel Rukeyser, J. Swaminathan, Charles Tomlinson, Monique Fong Wust, and the author. New Directions. \$6.50. Paper \$2.75.

Miss Rukeyser's head swarms with poetical phrases which she pops onto the page. Señor Paz writes *la vida* and Miss Rukeyser translates "this our life." Paz says "legs" (*piernas*); Rukeyser says "thighs." These liberties spring from zeal, and can be forgiven as excesses of love. For it is clear that Miss Rukeyser honors the poem she is translating. If ever there was an original poem constructed to represent faithfully a poem in another language, this is it. In fact, there are wonderful improvements on Paz from time to time, as when Miss Rukeyser writes "time in an ancient gesture folds its fan" to translate the far less beautiful "*mientras el tiempo cierra su abanico*." It is a wholly amazing performance, this brilliant and brilliantly flawed translation. The effect is something like Gongoia translating Shakespeare, Wagner conducting Rossini, Rubens copying Titian. There are hardnesses in Paz which Miss Rukeyser softens, but for the most part she can match him blow for blow. Genius is obviously at work here, and if Miss Rukeyser is bolder and more licentious than a timider, modester translator, it is because genius is not always its own master and because there is more than a trace of the outlaw in its blood.

Two translators undertook the complex "Blanco," Tomlinson and Aroul, and have achieved a faithful and strong English version of one of the most daring experimental poems in modern literature.

Paz is indeed lucky to have such good translators. This is an impressive book any way you look at it. Its choice of poems is sound and well balanced; the translations are of a high order; even Miss Rukeyser's crazy prose takes on shamanistic charm in the light of the book's splendor. Paz is certainly a poet about whom one might want to speak in the tongues.

Gabriela Mistral (1889-1957), the Chilean Nobel Laureate whose real name was Lucila Godoy Alcayaga, published only four books of poetry in her lifetime (*Desolación*, 1922; *Ternura*, 1924; *Tala*, 1938; *Lagar*, 1954), and preferred to be known for her work in education, which was pioneering and extensive. She did considerable work in Chile both as country schoolteacher and government advisor, was a consultant in designing the Mexican public-school program, and helped bring UNICEF into being. Her royalties poured into good works, and wherever innocence was outraged she was usually to be seen in the vanguard of rescuers. It is abundantly clear in the Foreword to this new translation of a selection of her poetry³ that she was a woman of inexhaustible spiritual energy.

To hear her read⁴ in her resonant, intelligent, and clear voice is a

³ SELECTED POEMS OF GABRIELA MISTRAL, A Bilingual Edition Translated and Edited by Doris Dana. Published for The Library of Congress by The Johns Hopkins Press. \$10.00.

⁴ GABRIELA MISTRAL READING HER OWN POETRY. Poems read by the author on December 12, 1950, at the Library of Congress, for the Archive of Hispanic Literature. Library of Congress Recording Laboratory HPL 2.

lesson in humanity. A great deal of Señorita Mistral's sensibility is like that of Mary Cassatt ("I must have been the candidate of the women and children," she remarked when she learned that she had been awarded the Nobel Prize), though it seems to have been her melancholy love poems that first made her famous.

Translating Gabriela Mistral is a very special problem. The goodness of her verse is so inextricably within the rhythms of Spanish, especially ballads, that translation into English bleaches out the color all but helplessly. Doris Dana's translation is careful, scholarly, and and faithful. But somehow everything gets lost.

*Duerme, duerme, dueño mío,
sin zozobra, sin temor,
aunque no se duerma mi alma,
aunque no descanse yo.*

Miss Dana translates:

Sleep, sleep, my infant lord,
without fear or trembling at my breast,
though my soul may never slumber,
though my soul may never rest.

The Spanish sings itself to a quiet guitar, and in that *sin zozobra, sin temor* there are dry leaves against a window pane and flies buzzing and a lullaby hummed by some archetypal mother. "Without fear or trembling at my breast" translates nothing of the original.

Once we realize that this poetry belongs to that little fortress of the untranslatable masters, we can relax and enjoy Miss Dana's versions, which have the admirable virtue of being accurate, and frequently enough participate in the lyrical beauty of their originals.

To turn from Gabriela Mistral to Paul Celan (1920-1970)⁵ is to realize what a wonderfully old-fashioned poet La Mistral was, how she got all her magic out of the ancient art of the folksong and the Mediterranean lyric, never needing to pay the least heed to the revolutions that convulsed poetry in Europe from the time of Apollinaire forward.

Celan is the model modernist. An Austrian Jew whose parents died in concentration camps, he saw his homeland overrun first by the Nazis and then by the Soviets. He himself spent the war in a work camp. He was a professor of German at the École Normale in Paris, writing seven books of poetry in German. He was also a translator, making German versions of Mandelstam, du Bouchet, Shakespeare, Ungaretti. It is fitting that this translation of his own difficult poetry should be done by a polyglot who has also translated Molière, Chekhov, and Hans Arp.

⁵ SPEECH-GRILLE AND SELECTED POEMS, by *Paul Celan*. Translated by Joachim Neugroschel. E. P. Dutton & Co. \$7.95.

Celan's poetry reminds me of that of the English poet Christopher Middleton. The words in it tend to stand away from each other and be little poems in themselves. The images are startling and in perfect focus, yet the whole poem is like something one has never seen before, a machine dreamed up by Kafka, or a painting by Ernst or Klee.

I have been wondering recently what the poetry of the modernist period is going to look like to the next century. Surely there are going to be views of it which we do not expect, and I have a feeling that they will be generated by the cryptic masks which so much modern poetry chooses to wear.

Here is the beginning of a poem by Celan:

*Lichtgewinn, messbar, aus
Distelähnlichem:
einiges
Rot, im Gespräch
mit einigem Gelb.*

Mr. Neugroschel records the English equivalents of these strange words:

Light-gain, gaugeable, from
something thistle-like:
some
red, conversing
with some yellow.

A riddle? It turns out that the poet is looking at the rubble in a vacant lot beside train tracks, and the rest of the poem discloses what we encounter often in Celan. He is writing not so much with words as with anguish. It will be remarked, I think, that words became *things* to a whole school of late twentieth-century poets. The scholars will trace this metamorphosis back to Mallarmé and the *Dadaistes*, but they will have an aesthetic problem of some intricacy when they try to account for the hardware-like brilliance and distinctness of words in such a poet as Celan.

Nouns dominate Celan's poetry, and verbs tend to be negligible or so surrealistic as to abandon their dictionary meaning. An eye weeps stones. Voices are nicked in the green. Nothingness is borne into windfalls (*Nichts in den Windbruch getragen*).

Celan is undoubtedly a distinguished poet. His distinction, however, puts him severely beside or perhaps ahead of his time. Kafka in 1910 was speaking to the Europe of 1940. Celan's angular, odd precision with things beyond a sense of the precise may well be written for lonely readers in pressure-chamber outposts in the anthrax forests of Mars.

WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

"The Current State of Criticism"

The current state of criticism is so facile and philosophically naive, so much of literary criticism, particularly in England and America, is puffed-up book reviewing or thinly disguised preaching, that a responsible collaboration with linguistics may prove the best hope.

RAISE YOUR HAND IMMEDIATELY upon identifying the Author of this recent truth. If you don't get it immediately just say, well, he is obviously a philosophically sophisticated thinker who knows that literary criticism—at best a minor art—is all too often only inflated book reviewing. (Good God, how trashy!) Notice too that such puerile behavior goes on in Anglo-Saxon countries, unlike maybe at the heart of the Continent where they order things differently. Note finally the word "linguistics" and in a flash you will know who speaks: the master of humane literacy, the Extraordinary Fellow of Churchill College, George Steiner has struck again.

His new collection of essays constantly put me in my humble place.¹ Already, from reading *Language and Silence*, I was made to feel my superficiality as an English reader: "to value Pope without a sure grasp of Boileau . . . is to read thinly and falsely"—my grasp of Boileau has always been feeble. Now there are more things to worry about, being a puffed-up book reviewer for one (though Steiner's collection is largely made up of *New Yorker* reviews), but also not being sufficiently excited by uses of silence in Beckett or Borges, nor aware that "In the message-flight of the bee, the exact angle matters," to which statement is appended a man-to-man footnote: "The standard work on this is, of course, Karl Von Frisch's *The Dance Language and Orientation of Bees* (1967)." Of course. The last tip is taken from an essay called "The Language Animal" and evidently I must become very reverent about being such an animal. Authorities are marshaled: "We are, as Hesiod and Xenophon may have been among the first to say, 'an animal, a life-form that speaks. Or as Herder put it, *ein Geschöpf der Sprache* . . ." Yes, Hesiod and Xenophon certainly may have been among the first to say it, and Herder put it well too, many years later. If one doesn't feel intimidated yet, it's always possible he may not be remembering Auschwitz enough, in which case things can be updated: "The ability to play and love Bach can be conjoined in the human spirit with the will to exterminate a ghetto or napalm a village." Does Steiner mean

¹ EXTRATERRITORIAL: Papers on Literature and the Language Revolution, by George Steiner. Atheneum. \$7.95.

that our boys love Bach? Or would the sentence give us the same spiritual thrill if we substituted Rock or Country Western?

In summary, I read falsely and thinly, don't understand how important language is, am not sufficiently worked up about the evils of pornography ("In the name of human decency, enough!"—*Language and Silence*), don't adequately feel the horror of war, am part of a self-satisfied lazy profession, perhaps even a literary don: "Literary dons, facing classes made up, increasingly, of young women, are not always inclined to refurbish their dwindling stock of obsolete perceptions." (If I didn't honor the term so much, I would allow the writer of that sentence the label "sexist.") Then there are superb vintage wine moments: "I recall an early connoisseur, in the cavernous rear of a bookstore in Lisbon, showing me—this, remember was in the early 1950's—Borges' translation of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* . . ." ² Oh to be in Lisbon in the early 50's, before *they* began to write grubby Ph.D's on Borges! I had difficulty even getting to Boston. But there is one and only one way out of my inadequacies; I can refurbish my dwindling stock of obsolete perceptions by studying, by responsibly collaborating with—*linguistics*! Since Steiner wants the wind to blow that way, he encourages us to look back in pity on those benighted souls—great chaps though they were—who somehow stumbled along without collaborating:

T. S. Eliot's celebrated dictum about something 'having happened to the mind of England' between the time of Donne and that of Tennyson not only strikes one today as portentously unverifiable; it embodies the style of judgment of what may well prove to have been the last major literary critic almost wholly innocent of a training or interest in modern linguistics.

But of course the portentousness is in Steiner, not Eliot; and after huffing and puffing and "disagreeing" with Chomsky about this and that he ends up, I should venture to say, without having produced a single piece of evidence that collaborating or fraternizing with the linguists will make us any less facile or preachy or philosophically naive than we already are. To use one of George Steiner's favorite phrases, I see little humane about the "humane literacy" supposedly revealed in this collection of essays; only a sense, previously encountered in his writings, that he knows what's best for us because, unlike the rest of us, he knows what's best.

I wonder if Kingsley Amis has a sure grasp of Boileau or has read Von Frisch's standard work on orientation in bees? He seems at any

² Steiner has always been a man of taste. In his earlier collection he speaks of paying three pounds for a set of George Eliot "in mint condition." "The bookseller remarked that they had lain unnoticed while a fairly expensive paperback of one particular novel, fashionably prefaced and got up, had sold rapidly. But to be read? Or to be part of the lively wallpaper and status objects in the rabbit warrens in which so many of us pass our falsely bright lives?" No rabbit warrens for Steiner, not with that set of Eliot in mint condition.

rate not to have gotten the word about collaborating with linguistics (he has always been weak on recalling Auschwitz) and insists on expressing unscientific unobjective attitudes toward Dracula, James Bond, beauty contests in Wales, lecturing in America, detective stories, and Ivy Compton-Burnett.³ One doesn't have to agree with him in giving low marks to *Mansfield Park* or *Lolita* or *Portnoy's Complaint*, all of which I admire a good deal more than he, to read through this collection with steady delight. For all George Steiner's talk about humane literacy, it is in Amis' pages from his occasional criticism done over the last fifteen years (merely "puffed-up book reviewing" Steiner would remind us) where one gets a live sense of what the term might mean.

Could it be that humane literacy has anything to do with wit? In a 1970 Postscript to a less than brilliant essay on Keats which Amis wrote fifteen years earlier ("This strikes me as a rather clever undergraduate essay") he remains unrepentant about some harsh remarks on the poet's technical shortcomings:

. . . to this day I find it genuinely curious that anybody should have written (as M. R. Ridley did) a whole volume called *Keats's Craftsmanship*: surely a candidate for that old shortest-books series along with *Canadian Wit and Humour*, *Great Marxist Humanitarians* and *The Vein of Humility in D. H. Lawrence*.

You needn't have tried to plough through *Keats's Craftsmanship* (though like others I did back in graduate school days when it was thought that was the point) to get a lift from this. Such remarks make one's day and are liberally scattered through *What Became of Jane Austen?* It's no drawback for a literary critic to be a good novelist; both identities are visible in this description of Dylan Thomas knocking them dead with the end of Yeats's "Lapis Lazuli":

He went normally enough, if rather slowly, as far as:

Their eyes mid many wrinkles, their eyes,
Their ancient, glittering eyes . . .

and then fell silent for a full ten seconds. This, as can readily be checked, is a very long time, and since his still rather baleful glare at his audience did not flicker, nor his frame move a hair's breadth, it certainly bore its full value on this occasion. At the end of this period his mouth dropped slowly and widely open, his lips crinkled like a child's who is going to cry, and he said in a tremulous half-whisper:

. . . are gay.

Amis correctly points to this as, though "magnificent," also an ex-

³ WHAT BECAME OF JANE AUSTEN? And Other Questions, by *Kingsley Amis*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. \$6.50.

ample of Thomas sounding and behaving like a charlatan; and his account expresses perfectly the annoyance I felt at hearing Thomas' breathless recording of that poem.

Amis' footnotes and postscripts are alone worth the price: in a splendid essay "No More Parades" which describes a year spent teaching at Cambridge in 1961, he first feels stimulated: "the presence there of Dr. Leavis guaranteed that, if nothing else, nobody could get away with talking about fountains of good sense and organ music," then adds a behind-the-hand footnote: "But you could get clean away with talking about normative significance, achieved actuality and the transcendent genius of D. H. Lawrence." Or he footnotes us in on a conversation between an acquaintance and Evelyn Waugh:

"What do you think of Kingsley Amis?" [asks the acquaintance]

"Ames," said Waugh.

"Amis, actually."

"You mean Ames."

"Look, I happen to know him, and he pronounces it Amis."

"The man's name is Ames," said Waugh, so firmly that discussion of my works was broken off at that point.

Finally there is the following magnificent Cambridge scene—Amis has been relating how depressing he finds the "braying and baying to one another" of upper-class undergraduates:

At times I became a one man resistance movement, broadcasting baleful glares, trying to force them to thank me when I stood aside for them in shop doorways, stopping them from hijacking taxis. No good. They were too firmly seated. Early one lunchtime I was enjoying a quiet beer and minding my own business in Miller's Wine Parlour when a voice suddenly bawled:

"Well of course I know that style of acting's been pretty much left behind these days but I must say that a fellow like Gielgud does seem to *me* to have a certain *presence* and *authority* and at least one does get the feeling that the man's read a *book* occasionally and can come on to the stage without *throwing himself about* like a . . ."

There was more. What arrested me was not the content of this discourse but its volume. I looked about me in amazement. Nobody else was taking the least notice; even Stanley behind the bar went on calmly polishing glasses. If I had been the father of the orator—he sat surrounded by parents and relatives—I should have laid my finger to my lips or, if that failed, my hand across his mouth. But then, I reflected, I am a child of the lower middle classes, whose members keep their voices down in public lest others may hear and condemn. And I had not had time to get used to Cambridge.

There is also much play with the remark made (rumor has it by Dr. Leavis) that Peterhouse, where Amis was in residence, had given a Fellowship to a *pornographer*. The best of these essays may be the non-book ones, about Cambridge, about schooldays, or Wales, or the most touching one about his father which concludes with a fine poem, "In Memoriam W.R.A." But I should perhaps admit that, from the memorable Saturday afternoon when I first read *Lucky Jim*, Amis has seemed to me a truly original writer and rare presence; so it's perhaps to be expected that these essays would make me only that much more confirmed in my judgment.

One of Amis' reprinted reviews is of *Love and Death in the American Novel*, and expresses admiration for a "witty, exasperating, penetrating, and indispensable book." He is surely right about that book, yet its author went on to write two further ones (*Waiting for the End* and *Return of the Vanishing American*) dealing respectively with apocalypse and The Indian: eventually he expressed the belief that all three made a single work preoccupied with "that peculiar form of madness which dreams, and achieves, and *is* the true West." The italicization is more than rhetorical craft; Leslie Fiedler has become, as I see it, totally and unironically committed to the truth of his vision, and is now something more than a mere literary critic or sociologist, as the preface to his collected essays makes clear:⁴

This collection is intended to record not only one man's sentimental and political education, but an experience shared by the overlapping generations which now find it mutually useful to pretend that a cultural "gap" separates them. What separates them in fact, however, is precisely what they have in common: the living memory recorded here of a loss of innocence which has kept the twice-born fathers of my own generation disconcertingly young, so that their sons have had, in order to seem even younger, to retreat from adolescence to childhood—from the show of sophistication to the profession of naïveté.

Already I am troubled by the windiness, the claim to total understanding ("What separates them *in fact*, however, is precisely . . ."), the flashy moving around of counters—adolescence, childhood, sophistication, naïveté, the author's "sentimental and political education." But then comes the clincher:

⁴ THE COLLECTED ESSAYS OF LESLIE FIEDLER. Stein & Day. Vol. 1, \$12.50; Vol. 2, \$12.50. As a reviewer of these volumes for this journal it should be confessed at the outset that I have no leg to stand on. Fiedler sized up THE HUDSON REVIEW years ago [after essays by him on Robert Louis Stevenson and others had been repeatedly rejected by us—F.M.] ("a genteel, prematurely middle-aged version of the *Kenyon Review*, edited by younger men endowed with a solemnity before literature almost indistinguishable from *rigor mortis* . . .") and drew a picture of its typical reviewer: "a limp, Hugh Kennerish admirer of Ezra Pound or Wyndham Lewis, dreaming that all their manly spite and vigor are his own. . ." Does he mean limp-wristed or just limp? Otherwise the description fitted me perfectly.

If I were as close to twenty-five or thirty-five at the moment as I am to fifty-five (and if in addition I were blessedly Black,) I would be writing just such an anatomy of the New Innocence as I once wrote of the Old; but trapped in time, I must content myself with the republication of old criticisms.

Besides wishing he were reborn, Black and a beautiful twenty-five, Fiedler also predictably thinks he might like to make films instead of writing further critical essays. For the moment he has given us two huge, expensive volumes: the first containing *An End to Innocence* and *No in Thunder*; the second, occasional essays up to and including recent statements. There is little in the second volume that Fiedler hasn't said often in his books or said twice within this one, and I shall forego comment on the material published before 1965. In that important year appeared "The New Mutants" in which, with brilliant observation and prophecy, he told us what has in fact happened in the academy over the last six years. But something was happening to Fiedler as well; if he started out as an anatomist, not totally disavowing the satiric or cold eye, he became something else: "If I live long enough, perhaps I shall finally grow young enough to disavow all vestiges of the humanistic tradition that persist in my thinking—turning my back on the past, recent and remote, quite as if, like some fifteen-year-old, I, too, inhabit a world I never made." Not a modest thirty-five, or twenty-five, but fifteen, and with the slate wiped clean of vestigial humanism! "Surely some revelation is at hand;/ Surely the second coming is at hand."

What has brought Dr. Fiedler to this pass—to want to be "born of one's children"—I cannot say; but rereading *An End to Innocence* I was struck afresh with the amount of hectoring and finger-wagging at misguided innocent left-liberals it contained, and looked up again Harold Rosenberg's astute criticism of the book in "Couch Liberalism and the Guilty Past" (*Tradition of the New*). Twenty years later, it is the same story once more, except with all of the as yet unborn—professors, readers of books in the outworn humanistic tradition, listeners to music outside the pop-rock orbit (Schumann perhaps even?), oldsters still content to be just parents to their children—nobody's sweethearts now, as it were—all to be transcended or expunged. But Fiedler cannot transcend without making it clear just how much we're missing in being unborn. There was always something a bit shaky about the "us" whom he presumed to speak for and address: "Surely it is not the lucidity and logic of Robert Lowell or Theodore Roethke or John Berryman which we admire, but their flirtation with incoherence and disorder. And certainly it is Mailer at his most nearly psychotic, Mailer the creature rather than the master of his fantasies who moves us to admiration . . ." ("The New Mutants"). Stop, stop, I want to get off this sentence-track at about eight different spots; he is not talking about the Lowell or

Mailer I most admire. But the express rolls on: "we do not love, say, Marshall McLuhan less because he continually risks sounding like the body-fluids man in *Dr. Strangelove*." Oh don't we? But Fiedler never has time to put a question to his own argument; he talks for victory, while pretending that it is only plain common sense being espoused. He covers his new mutant heroes with buckshot sentences; the gaps between highbrow and pop must be closed, since "a poet like Ed Sanders, or a novelist like Leonard Cohen grows weary of his confinement in the realm of traditional high art"—though some of "us" may have never even known they were confined there. Or there is Richard Farina "who died very young, but not before he had written that imperfect, deeply moving novel, *Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up to Me*" which has evidently moved Fiedler to the point where he works the phrase "deeply moving" into his style, one of the rankest vestiges of our humanistic tradition of book-reviewing, or blurb-writing. I understand why Ken Kesey is a hero to the new Fiedler, and remember that a couple of years ago two or three students around here were working that line; but it's not just Kesey—"Contrary to what we had long believed, it is James Fenimore Cooper who now remains alive, or rather who has been reborn . . ." Reborn where? I look for undergraduates eagerly moving through the pages of *The Prairie* and *Pathfinder*. Are they all at Buffalo, or have they taken Leatherstocking to the woods with them?

Maybe this late conversion has something to do with Being Busted: as Hemingway put it, if you've had it, you know. But should Fiedler's vision of post-modernist, post-humanistic life not strike everyone as desirable to get with, here is an appropriate quotation from a book of thirty years ago written to cheer up those not born blessedly black or red either:

Do not let us spring up and prostrate ourselves every half-minute, as the latest ambassador arrives with News from Nowhere, with an auctioneer's clatter. Let us remain seated, the feminine privilege: let us smile sceptically, also the feminine privilege: let us insist upon every feminine privilege: let us be faultlessly polite, or rather over-polite, crudely polite: Let us show this political tout, dressed up as a wise man from the East, that we have expected him, that we should only have been surprised if he had not turned up: that we hope he soon will go. This is the only way to treat the Thousand and One Magi and Chaldeans who successively rattle our knocker.⁵

Warner Berthoff, whose new book seems to me immensely heartening for anyone disinclined toward marrying literature with linguistics or juicing it up with apocalyptic swinging, is fond of quoting a remark from Emerson's *Journals* that is a lesson for all Thousand and One Magi, all knocker-rattlers, all of us:

⁵ Wyndam Lewis: *Paleface* (1929).

It seems to me sometimes that we get our education ended a little too quick in this country. As soon as we have learned to read and write and cipher, we are dismissed from school and we set up for ourselves. We are writers and leaders of opinion and we write away without check of any kind, play whatsoever mad prank, indulge whatever spleen, or oddity, or obstinacy, comes into our dear head, and even feed our complacency thereon, and thus fine wits come to nothing, as good horses spoil themselves by running away and straining themselves.

Berthoff quotes the entry in one of the essays in this collection⁶ but also (and where it first caught my attention) in a sharply critical discussion of theme-ridden books on American literature (*The American Adam*, *The Reign of Wonder*, etc.) that strained their particular metaphors past the point of credibility. Berthoff was moved to raise a warning finger at these books, some of whom at least he also admired, because of a temperamental recalcitrance toward any book however clever which turns up with a new key to understanding American experience through particular "themes" or metaphors or archetypes revealed in its literature. As against this, Berthoff has chosen to work from within: a book on Melville, a pamphlet on Edmund Wilson, and in what seems to me the most notable piece of American literary history in some time: *The Ferment of Realism: American Literature 1884-1919*. He believes, like Aristotle, that literature "recovers" or imitates "the historical"—"the sequential acting out . . . of the human condition"—and that like history it consists of "patterns or sequences of the action of knowing, the writer's act of knowing first of all; patterns which in their totality are indeterminate and untranslatable and which, moreover, describe nothing more exactly than their own creation, so that they can be known in their full reach and bearing only through a kind of ideal re-creation." "Recovery" is thus extraordinarily hard to bring off: the writer's performance "exists in consciousness only as we ourselves are actively following it forward, as we freely, generously, alertly collaborate in its renewal"; yet, he goes on to add, "we lose touch with it," so that "the most strenuous countermeasures are required merely to keep within reach of what is lost even while it is being won." These sentences from Berthoff's lead essay—"The Study of Literature and the Recovery of the Historical"—may recall the spirit of R. P. Blackmur, not the least for the way a reader must sweat over many of them (both Steiner and Fiedler are comparatively easy to read); and this stylistic effort is an effort of the whole mind that asks not to be understood too quickly, as Berthoff would not have us understand literature too quickly, the better to plunder it for thematic continuities and interlocking designs.

It is a deeply informed, passionately curious and therefore sceptical

⁶ FICTIONS AND EVENTS, by Warner Berthoff. E. P. Dutton. \$10.00.

mind that informs these pages, whether in speculative improvisation on impossibly difficult topics like Literature, Narrative Forms, Reality, "The Novel in a Time of Troubles"; or in the patient cumulative effort to recreate the nature of a book: Emerson's *Nature*; Melville's *Confidence Man*; Mailer's *Armies of the Night* and Malcolm X's *Autobiography*; Edmund Wilson's *Patriotic Gore*—the last of which after a fully sympathetic creation of Wilson's character (partly through a brilliantly footnoted comparison of him with Rexford Tugwell, an upstate New York contemporary) tries to define its limitations:

. . . his judgment operates best in the *words* people leave behind them, but . . . as his examination draws him into speculation about the reasons for these words, the human motives, actions, and necessities they refer to, this verbal positivism—the quality that gives his literary chronicling its admirable particularity and common sense—becomes more obstruction than asset . . . And we may begin to feel that perhaps Wilson's praiseworthy belief in the efficacy and validity of *literature* . . . is damagingly related to a profound distrust of life and all its disconcerting profusion of appearances; a distrust of the mind's freedom to act among them; a binding insecurity that issues in the countermeasures of aggressive annoyance and chronic irritability.

This seems to me fairly to set the level and tone at which *Fictions and Events* operates. Not many jokes, no spleen or sneering, no backbiting, an unflagging interest in setting down to the fullest pitch of definition and qualification the sense of felt life in a book, or the human implications of taking this or that line of argument. As with the other collections, there are a number of "Post-scripts 1970" which have always the special force of a mind turning back to its own words and moving on from them. They are of interest even when Berthoff makes more puzzling to me his already puzzling overpraise of Muriel Spark, and of Iris Murdoch—whose last novel he terms "of harrowing force," then tries to give that "harrowing" some force by dragging in Vietnam and Auschwitz too quickly. And the dense, patient review of a book on Hart Crane, makes one realize that criticism should not be puffed-up, but merely imaginative book-reviewing. I notice in conclusion that Berthoff's key and recurring words are "civil" and "creaturely." They seem to me nicely to suggest, in their root meanings and contextual extensions, the serious informed untrendiness of this critic's mind. With Berthoff inside the academy, helping us to recover the historical, and Amis outside, picking off the latest ambassadors with News from Nowhere, there is positively a hint that in the current state of criticism life may still be worth living; perhaps the moreso if linguistics and popcult too will continue to do their own groovy things wrapped in their own bags over there, somewhere.

MARVIN MUDRICK

Bearding Conrad

BOTH THESE BOOKS¹ ARE CATALOGUES OF INFERENCE and not very carefully hedged speculation, raids on whole libraries of secondary sources, and as smug as people who do forty minutes of calisthenics daily: "Reconstructing the events of the assassination has not been easy, but it has been worthwhile in that it allows us to study an example of Conrad's technique. . . ." All such literary scholarship (the prototype is Lowes's *The Road to Xanadu*) depends on two assumptions: (1) that the author and works being examined are unassailably immortal; and (2) that the method helps us to retrace the steps by which imagination transmutes the dross of experience into the massy gold of art. Somehow, though, the scholar turns out to be the hero. Everybody knows that artists, unlike scholars, are liable to spells of slackness: "The South American continent had been well observed and written about, and Conrad might have put himself through an intensive reading course in preparation for writing . . . [*Nostromo*], had he wished"; but the lengths to which Professor Sherry will go are limited only by his eyesight, as he proves at this point with a great casual one-liner of a footnote: "I read about 200 books on the area in search of Conrad's sources." Sherry considers a dozen or so novels and stories besides *Nostromo* (multiply 200 by a dozen, and divide by two detached retinas). A scholar who doesn't even trust information (" . . . little is known about these men, . . . and, as I shall show, not all the information we have about them is correct . . .") certainly has to burn the midnight oil to keep up. Sherry seems to have devoured not merely all the books but all the newspapers, weeklies, monthlies, pamphlets, manifestoes, court records, official documents, company files, ship's logs, memoirs, diaries of the period between 1880 and 1910 in Singapore, London, the Congo; he interviewed participants, friends of participants, children and grandchildren of participants; he collected photographs:

. . . at least one assessor described by Conrad in *Lord Jim* approximates in appearance to one of the assessors who sat in judgment over Captain Beard and Conrad in the case of the *Palestine*. " 'Did you think it likely from the force of the blow?' asked the assessor sitting to the left. He had a thin horseshoe beard, salient cheek-bones, and with both elbows on the desk clasped his rugged hands before his face . . . " (p. 33). This is the same assessor

¹ CONRAD'S EASTERN WORLD, by Norman Sherry. Cambridge University Press. \$9.50. CONRAD'S WESTERN WORLD, by Norman Sherry. Cambridge University Press. \$14.50.

described above as a "sailing-ship skipper with a reddish beard" and a "pious disposition." I have a photograph in my possession of John Blair, one of the nautical assessors in the *Palestine Inquiry*. He is a man of strong appearance, noticeable cheek-bones and a thin horseshoe beard. Blair was not, at the time of the *Palestine Court of Inquiry*, a "sailing-ship skipper" but he had been some six years previously, before his vessel was wrecked off Raffles Light-house, Singapore.

Such triumphantly circumstantial correspondences! but "So what?" snarls Reader X, unwilling to cry uncle or captain at the reduplicated horseshoe beard or any other scrap of false specification. Does Sherry (or Conrad) think a real beard or a Captain Beard is no bristlier than a mere fictional beard? Life doesn't slide over into fiction so readily as that, but Sherry hasn't noticed.

One of the drawbacks of his method is that, spending eons at it, digging up beards and cheekbones, he doesn't see why it shouldn't explain how novels are put together or come apart: "There is a change in the character of the hero in *Lord Jim* once he goes to Patusan. This change is not simply the result of his more active role. It obviously involved a change in Conrad's conception of his hero, and it marks a weakness in the book as a whole. It is apparent that the change in character depended upon a shift from A. P. Williams to some other source." Novelists had better adhere to their sources or else, and Sherry announces with satisfaction that because Conrad drops Source One and takes up Source Two, Jim breaks in half; the notion not having occurred to Sherry—as it would have to any novelist or reader—that Jim may be discontinuous, if he is, for a thousand other reasons, or seamless coming from a thousand sources. Scholarship isn't at its best sitting in the artist's chair acting out fantasies of creation.

Yet Conrad invites the wrong kind of attention. Reading *Nostromo*, for instance, one can't stop wondering how close to his authorities he is at any moment, what vignettes and histories are being scarcely disguised, what books the dispositions of his characters and the interiors of their old Spanish houses are being more or less painstakingly copied from. Sherry, having quoted a long passage from *Nostromo*, remarks that "Conrad has made use here of Eastwick's first impressions during his initial exploration of Valencia. . . . Eastwick's interpolations and forceful directives to his friend—'Now, mark me,' 'You see the large house on the right hand'—are very like Captain Mitchell's 'We enter now . . .,' 'Observe the old Spanish houses,' and both men make use of white-covered umbrellas . . .': Sherry is absurd, but Conrad encourages him with the musty second-handness of the sham-impressionistic prose—

Thus Captain Mitchell would talk in the middle of the Plaza,

holding over his head a white umbrella with a green lining; but inside the cathedral, in the dim light, with a faint scent of incense floating in the cool atmosphere, and here and there a kneeling female figure, black or all white, with a veiled head, his lowered voice became solemn and impressive.

Conrad is a very bookish writer, though Henry James (who plays here the maiden shyly palpating an antique warrior's stringy biceps and murmuring "Ah!") thought otherwise: ". . . [*The Mirror of the Sea*] is a wonder to me really—for its so bringing home the prodigy of your past experiences: bringing it home to me more personally and directly, I mean, the immense treasure and the inexhaustible adventures. No one has *known*—for intellectual use—the things you know. . . ." Conrad himself was less persuaded of the immensity and inexhaustibility, as Sherry demonstrates by quoting a recollection of Edward Garnett's: "On one occasion, in describing to him a terrible family tragedy of which I had been an eye-witness, Conrad became visibly ill-humored and at last cried out with exasperation, 'Nothing of the kind has ever come my way! I have spent half my life knocking about in ships, only getting ashore between voyages. I know nothing, nothing! except from the outside. I have to guess at everything!'"

Conrad was exaggerating; the early novels weren't the work of a writer who knew nothing. His personal knowledge of men under stress, however, had dematerialized into literature by the time he wrote *The Mirror of the Sea*; and James misaddressed to this plausible laureate exercise the enthusiasm he might have conferred with some aptness on *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* or *Heart of Darkness* or *Typhoon*. As for *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent*, and *Under Western Eyes*, they are summer reading more or less entertainingly pieced together out of hints and patches from what Conrad called "dull, wise books," books of fact and reminiscence; the last novels are worse, much shabbier; but, *Nostromo* and after, none of them suggests a level of understanding usefully higher than that in almost any of Conrad's magazine-stories—say, "Gaspar Ruiz," in which Conrad is dispirited enough to write about "a scoundrel of the deepest dye" and his "nefarious designs."

Conrad was an outsider from the beginning; his outburst to Garnett was a genuine *cri du coeur*, he had to guess at everything; only, at the beginning he could sometimes make a virtue of his exclusion: expatriate and exile, passing "half . . . [his] life knocking about in ships," never quite at home in the language he was in some of his early writing able to derive with desperate care from the strangeness of a nearly unintelligible world. Sherry's single success in his two ambitious books is his study of the sources of *Heart of Darkness*, the reasons being that for once his method doesn't get in the way of what Conrad is doing, and that what Conrad is doing is worth considering.

In *Heart of Darkness* Conrad transforms, particular by particular, with the most deliberate consistency of intention, the settled, built-up, commercially feasible, meanly purposeful quotidian Congo (of which his experience was so brief) into the prehistorically isolated and uninhabited, shelterless, impracticable, homicidally purposeless nightmare Congo of his desire. (Contemplating this process may lead the reader to regret the unhysterical novel that might have been made directly from the facts of the time and place, though Conrad himself wasn't the writer to have done it.) Throughout the novel Conrad suffers from the force of the outward and actual, which as far as possible he suppresses for the sake of an intensely simplified paradigm of his suffering. *Heart of Darkness* is sincere melodrama, whose agitation is disproportionate to its events but not to the author's unexaminable feelings. The duality of the novel is clear enough even in the relative straightforwardness of the opening pages, since despite Conrad's mode of presentation people do have names, things do have functions and purposes: "The business intrusted to this fellow," says Marlow, "was the making of bricks—so I had been informed; but there wasn't a fragment of a brick anywhere in the station, and he had been there more than a year—waiting"; yet, as Sherry points out with somewhat confounding solemnity, while Conrad was at Kinchassa the brickmaker there—"un spécialiste, M. De Ligne"—"far from . . . being idle, . . . seems to have been singularly active" making bricks; or Marlow invents a graveyard of the approaching machine age—

I came upon a boiler wallowing in the grass, then found a path leading up the hill. It turned aside for the boulders, and also for an undersized railway-truck lying there on its back with its wheels in the air. One was off. The thing looked as dead as the carcass of some animal. I came upon more pieces of decaying machinery, a stack of rusty rails. To the left a clump of trees made a shady spot, where dark things seemed to stir feebly. I blinked, the path was steep. A horn tooted to the right, and I saw the black people run. A heavy and dull detonation shook the ground, a puff of smoke came out of the cliff, and that was all. No change appeared in the face of the rock. They were building a railway. The cliff was not in the way of anything; but this objectless blasting was all the work going on.

—a paragraph of Conradian theater which Sherry discredits by proving, with evidence from his sources, that building a railway takes a lot of work and makes a lot of noise, that railways are an efficient means of transportation, and that, since "the work on the railway was in its initial stages, and the first rails and sleepers had been brought out from Belgium on the vessel Conrad travelled in," it was doubtful Conrad would have had the "opportunity to observe a railway truck, machinery and rails . . . abandoned and rusting."

Sherry doesn't know that *Heart of Darkness* is unique among Conrad's novels, but his method gathers the evidence that permits us to follow the obsessively sustained procedure that makes it so. Conrad's procedure here is quite unlike his procedure not only in the later novels, for which customarily he transcribes from his reference-texts with alterations and additions as inert as the originals, but in such early novels as *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* and *Typhoon* (neither of which Sherry discusses), for which he seems to have relied on a seaman's still scrupulously recollected personal and professional experiences that—what was impossible for him with the Congo voyage—he could bear to treat directly. "I am not," said Conrad, "a facile inventor. I have some imagination,—but that's another thing." *Heart of Darkness*, however, alone among his novels, is almost nothing except invention—a perverse sort of invention, consisting as it does mainly in distortion, omission, misrepresentation with the aim of denying the apparent and probable nature of the objects described. *Heart of Darkness* is Conrad's revenge for the Congo voyage he couldn't write about.

Photographs of Conrad are as they should be: the face is defensively bearded (not the unconcealing fringe of a horseshoe beard); the look is waxy and remote, as if its owner is already an exhibit at Madame Tussaud's. According to his bossy wife, he was exceedingly nervous and anxiety-ridden, incapable of supporting the most insignificant bad news or disruption of routine if he were to go on writing or even staying alive from one day to the next (though, continuing to do his writing, he bore up for years under his unrelieved burden of financial anxiety with a fortitude that might have gratified many a wife). He was a man with a secret, but, since he was an intelligent and unpretentious man, the secret could have had nothing to do with the treasure-trove of inexhaustible riches that fulsome old taste-mongers like James impute to practitioners of the sacred craft. Conrad detested the job of writing, almost always did it with petrifying slowness, and as he grew older did it less and less well. He had also detested the sea, which he remembered as an occupation of stupefying boredom. He belonged nowhere. Sherry pauses for a moment, during his discussion of *Nostromo*, to characterize its author: "Father Corbelán's condemnation of Decoud fits the creator of Decoud: 'You believe neither in stick nor stone.'" But not believing isn't not caring, and the secret may have had something to do with how, belonging nowhere and believing nothing, Conrad could care as painfully and unceasingly as he did.

GERALD WEALES

Fiction Chronicle

WHEN IVY COMPTON-BURNETT DIED IN AUGUST 1969, she left the manuscript, almost complete but unfinished, of *The Last and the First*, the novel she had worked at slowly during the final, troubled five years of her life. Both Livia Gollancz, in the "British Publisher's Note" that introduces the novel, and Charles Burkhart, in the strangely apologetic critical epilogue, insist that the published work is practically the same as the manuscript, that only "essential editing" has been done, the correction of obvious errors, except for one "necessary bridge passage," never identified. Elizabeth Sprigge's comments on the manuscript, quoted by Miss Gollancz, suggest that the editing was not that minimal. She describes the "many crossings out" of the early notebooks, the "scribble" and "loose pages" of the last one, the need to decide where and whether or not a stray passage should be fitted in. This process, plus the distress that Compton-Burnett felt over the book as late as June 1969, indicates that *The Last and the First* is hardly the novel that it would have been had she had time to finish it. Even so, except for a touch of over-explicitness, it is pure Compton-Burnett and one of the books in this *omnium gatherum*¹ that has given me the greatest pleasure. Of course, Compton-Burnett is a special taste, one that I am not even sure can be acquired. I first heard of the lady more than twenty years ago when an enthusiastic guest lecturer sang her praises—not so much sang, a Compton-Burnett character might say, as crisply exhibited—at a special summer school on modern British literature that I attended at the University of London. When I asked Geoffrey Bullough, who was running the school, why one of the regular faculty had not given the lecture, he said that they all knew she was an important novelist but none of them could read her. It was years before I worked my way out from under that recommendation, but when I finally picked up my first Compton-Burnett novel—*Manservant and Maidservant*, under its American title, *Bullivant and the Lambs*—I found not only that I could read her, but that I chose to. And still do.

"What an empty episode!" says Eliza Heriot at the beginning of the novel when her son, having been sent to pick up some change

¹ THE LAST AND THE FIRST, by I. Compton-Burnett. Knopf. \$5.95. THE WHIRLIGIG OF TIME, by Isabel Bolton. Crown. \$5.95. MEET ME IN THE GREEN GLEN, by Robert Penn Warren. Random House. \$7.95. CANCERQUEEN AND OTHER STORIES, by Tommaso Landolfi, translated by Raymond Rosenthal. Dial. \$7.95. FIRE SERMON, by Wright Morris. Harper & Row. \$5.95. THE TENANTS, by Bernard Malamud. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. \$6.95. THE BLOOD ORANGES, by John Hawkes. New Directions. \$6.95.

which is no longer in the library, returns and offers her a handful of coins from his own purse. "It seems to have no meaning." In Compton-Burnett there are no "empty" episodes and even the most casual sounding line has meaning. "I never think teacups can be equal to the tempests they contain," says Eliza's daughter. The first chapter, the breakfast scene of which the "empty episode" is a part, establishes Eliza as the family tyrant and Hermia, her oldest step-daughter, as the only one of the children (she is 34) willing to contest the older woman's position. The lovely thing about the passage dealing with the substitute coins is that it is intrinsic to the novel in so many ways. Not only does it do its psychological job, establishing Eliza's pettiness, Angus's willingness to placate her and Hermia's bristly rectitude, but it works structurally and thematically as well. The novel, in effect, opens and closes with money, moves from Eliza's concern about petty cash to Hermia's handing over a fortune to her father, but in both cases the money is important less for itself than as an instrument for wielding or defusing power. Beyond that, the introduction of the word *change* at this point and in this context is nicely ironic, for it is Hermia, not Eliza, who wants her change and who finally gets it. The need for change, the impossibility of change, the dangers of change run through the novel like a refrain. "Change is never for the better," says Miss Murdoch, who is resisting Hermia's attempt to reorganize her school. "Conscious change is seldom for the worse," insists Hermia. There is a nice ambiguity at the end of the book which suggests that neither or both these ladies are right. As the modestly triumphant Hermia and the not very chagrined Eliza seem to become friends, Roberta says, "It will put a change through our lives. And no change is wholly good."

The difficulty with Compton-Burnett, for many people, is that her novels seem so insular, so involved in the polite intrigue of upper-class or at least genteel families. This sense of apartness tends to be heightened by the settings, usually unspecific as to time and place (this one is an exception; we know the town), by the barely perceptible action, by the almost nonexistent narrative, by the oddly formal conversation that carries the stories. The insularity is only apparent, a vehicle for a major theme. One may accept her artificiality as that of comedy of manners, but only if that amorphous genre can be seen in the light of Eliza's remark, "Nothing goes deeper than manners. They are involved with the whole of life." Compton-Burnett's subject in *The Last and the First*, as in the rest of her novels, is power, its use and abuse; wherever two or three people are gathered together, a pecking order is immediately established. To emphasize her thematic seriousness, however, is not to catch the essential qualities of her fiction. For me, the most important things about her work are the intricacy of her verbal play and the surprising and sometimes frightening funniness that the books manifest.

Although she seems an unlikely author to compare to Samuel Beckett, she uses language with the same kind of deliberation, asking that you listen to the real meaning of words, the complete implications of a sentence. Reading her, I find myself suddenly laughing aloud, caught by the appropriateness of a particular line and the waves of possibility that fan out from it. Consider this speech of Angus's: "I have a great respect for failure. For letting things pass to other people and having nothing oneself. It is a thing we can speak of openly. It is so much less futile than success." At first glance, particularly to an American with the success-ethic drummed into his head, this sounds like simply a clever paradox, at best suitable to Angus's position in the novel; and then it begins to reverberate, to escape its context and cry out after Richard Nixon and John Lindsay and, even, Johnny Carson. But those are my sidetracks. Compton-Burnett pulls me back to the page, shows me that her wit is integral, her artificiality deceptive. Like Congreve—and that comparison is perhaps more apt than the one with Beckett—she has been accused of making all her characters speak with one voice. I will not go quite so far as Horace Walpole did in his defense of Congreve ("No character drops a sentence that would be proper in any other mouth"), but there is skillful variety in the voices that come to my ear. Her characters emerge as individuals or at least as types, each with his psychological mannerisms clearly on display. As for the more extended funny passages, they range from a menacing wryness—the interview scene at the beginning of *Mother and Son*—to a kind of open hilarity, like the parlor-game scene at the end of this novel. But whether the comedy is played for *frisson* or laughter, or both at once, it remains central to the game that Compton-Burnett plays with her characters and with her readers.

"A game is what it is," said Eliza. "There is no reason to be serious over it."

"It seems there must be," said Erica. "People are always serious over games."

As one of the characters says of Eliza, but might have said of her creator, "there tends to be something in her words that remains. It is a thing we notice about them."

At this point, I should begin a sentence "And speaking of families . . ." or "... of power . . ." or "... of change . . ." and segue into the next review. So goes the patchwork that holds omnibus reviews together. I think I will skip it this time. Although I can find legitimate connections among several of the novels—theme, technique, tone—the only thing that the seven books have in common is that all of them were written by authors of reputation. Some principle of order is necessary, I know, but I cannot even fall back on preferences, for in most cases what I found to like was so mixed with

what displeased me that no grading system will work. Here, then, are comments on the most recent work of six more writers, presented—for want of a more legitimate method of organization—in order of seniority.

Isabel Bolton has had her serious admirers ever since Edmund Wilson “discovered” her when, a woman in her sixties, she assumed a new name and a new style with *Do I Wake or Sleep* (1946). Until I picked up *The Whirligig of Time* for this review, the only Bolton novel I had read was *The Christmas Tree* (1949). More than twenty years after the fact, all that I can remember is that there was something vaguely disquieting about the book, that it seemed to be doing something other than it was doing and that I was neither sure what it was or that I cared. Now, in her late eighties, Miss Bolton has published her first novel since 1952. It is not quite the sentimental novel (ladies’ fiction, we used to say) some reviewers have called it, but I do not think that it quite succeeds at its most ambitious. Through the memories of two characters who are about to meet for the first time in more than fifty years, it tells the story of a vaguely poetic young man (one of the two rememberers) who manages, by an almost willful failure of perception, to marry—as he puts it—“an incorrigible bore.” Oddly enough, the wife—a wealthy, humorless managerial type whose devotion is suffocating—is the most interesting character in the novel, perhaps because she is the most fully realized. The protagonist’s mother says that only Jane Austen could have created such a person, but it is the other characters—the hero, the mother, the spinster cousin (the other rememberer)—whom I would like to see in Austen’s hands. Bolton is not nearly as sharp with them as she might have been, for she seems to take seriously her hero’s elopement with the fascinating Helen, and I cannot help but think that—given the perspective of fifty years—the genteel anguish should have turned to high comedy. But, then, I find *Washington Square* very funny.

One might suppose, given two characters recalling the same events, that the novelist might go for a *Rashomon* effect, but that is not Bolton’s intention. Although the memories are not exactly coincident—each character is limited by the part he played—the people involved and the situations are seen as through one pair of eyes. Why then the flashbacks that muddy the simple narrative thrust of an old-fashioned love story? The point—in fact, the twin points—of the book lie in the present. We not only watch the collapse of the hero’s marriage, but we get his mother’s story as well and learn that she resisted—for his sake—a similar illicit love. When the young man gave in to his grand passion, he not only deserted his wife and child, but his dying mother and a whole world that she had tried to preserve by not running away in her own time. Now he has come back “to assuage a sense of guilt and sorrow that had become a chronic

state of mind," to kneel, stiffly, at his cousin's feet for she, who has become indented in both their minds with the woman she adored, can answer for his mother the question he asks on the first page of the novel, "Am I forgiven . . .?" The whirligig of time cures all? Yes, I suppose so, but Bolton does not want to leave her novel at so simple a level. As he goes toward the final confrontation, the hero wonders "why, since the world had undergone such changes—initiations—wholesale tragedies, he should be entitled to fix his thoughts for the past two days and nights exclusively upon his life, his passions, his loyalties, and his betrayals." He is "entitled" because his creator's thoughts are elsewhere. The central image of the book, the one that both characters keep remembering, is the park where they played as children. It becomes not only their childhood, a world in which the mother's pain is masked as a protective "radiance and beauty," but an historical childhood as well. The death of the mother and World War I are joined in a single sentence in the cousin's memory. The celebrated halcyon years before the first world war were certainly never as golden as nostalgia makes them—although they must have been almost that warm and sheltering to the park children of this novel. In any case, for the two old people looking into their past and for their contemporary and creator, the messy marital problems of the hero, in which passion not decorum calls the tune, is the small private chaos at the center of the massive disintegration represented by two world wars and the prospect of annihilation. The difficulty with *The Whirligig of Time* is that whenever this theme surfaces—as it does so noticeably in the final paragraph—the novel dwindles into an editorial, and that shrinkage is likely to reduce the retrospective plot to notes from a bygone society page.

Stripped to bare bone, Robert Penn Warren's *Meet Me in the Green Glen* looks familiar enough, another variant on the perennial Southern love-and-murder tale in which the outsider is sacrificed to (or saved from) the social and psychological conventions implicit in the setting. A Sicilian, a young man fresh from the penitentiary, a "durn nigger-loving dago," as one of the characters calls him, walks down a Tennessee road and into a situation that will finally put him into the electric chair. Endowed with the kind of superior sexual understanding that, according to the Tennessee Williams genetic theory, all Mediterranean males possess, Angelo awakens the love of lifeless, aging Cassie Spottwood, little more than an appendage to her paralyzed, once triumphantly priapic husband. When Angelo turns to a black girl in the neighborhood (Sunder Spottwood's daughter, just to keep things neat) and finally rejects Cassie, she kills her husband, a murder for which Angelo is brought to trial. Since this is not a Harper Lee novel, the rumples, feckless, small-town lawyer fails to save Angelo, even though Cassie shouts out her guilt after the sentencing, and the mad last-minute ride to the governor of

Cassie and Cy Grinder (the sweetheart of her youth) dissolves into pointlessness as they fail even to find out where the governor has gone to dinner.

With that kind of plot, a novelist with a simple social conscience could put together a movingly ironic story, condemning the self-protective destructiveness of the Southern small town, the kind of novel that used to turn up with a fair degree of frequency in the 1950s (when, in fact, this novel is set). Warren makes use of the local mores and prejudices, of course, and there may even be implicit criticism, but he no more wants to induce moral outrage in his readers than he wishes to titillate them with the lurid events in his story. Nor is he really interested in setting, at least not in a local-color way, even though he knows how to furnish Cassie's kitchen or a lawyer's office, how to butcher a deer or set a table. In fact, he is so little concerned with his artifacts at the realistic level that he lets the wine-red Chevrolet which carries Cassie to the sanatorium in Nashville turn into a white Buick a few pages after it is introduced. A similar—and less trivial—error can be seen in his ending the book with the suicide of one of the leading characters, an event which takes place earlier than the “now” of the Epilogue, at which time the man is presumably still alive.

Plot, then, becomes as secondary as milieu, as social implication. The quarry that Warren is after in the novel is man himself, his attempt to ground himself in a world that keeps slipping away and that, as the novel itself says, is an uncatchable beast. At the beginning, Cassie is standing at the window, watching Angelo walk down the road in the rain, trying to separate what is inside and outside her head. That opening contains a hint of theme (events keep climbing back inside the heads of the participants) and method (suddenly, on page seven, I stopped and realized that I had worked my way through paragraphs of character rumination and supportive description and picked up only two—at best three—sentences of traditional novelistic information). Near the end of the book, Cy Grinder has apparently “learned to move untouched through the corridors of haunting and fierce symbols that the Valley was. So a tree became only a tree, a stone only a stone.” Not even then, however, do *things* really escape their symbolic other selves. All through the novel, for the characters—and for the author too—props and setting take on special meaning. One can accept Angelo's black patent-leather shoes as correct for the character and the red mud of the Tennessee road as factually accurate, but those black shoes smeared with that red mud when the character first appears are as redolent with significance as any poetic image. Or take a passage that lacks so central an image, a typical descriptive sentence:

Then the red Chevrolet had shaken free, and was on the west road,

moving fast between fields where a drop of dew glittered on the tip of the bending corn blade and therein was globed all the fractured colors of the world, and where a field lark, with song, flared up from the grass, flicking wetness from its wings.

The countryside at dawn, perhaps, but that car has "shaken free" of the town limits to carry Cassie to her incarceration, and the sentence provides not only an ironic contrast in its Browning variation but a hint of where this unlikely Pippa is passing to in "fractured colors" and perhaps in "flared up." An empty kitchen, a deserted street, a shack in the woods, an abandoned sawmill, nothing quite exists in and for itself. Everything feeds and colors the immediate events and the events themselves slip, waver, change color as the characters embrace, alter, reject them.

For all the plot I described above, nothing happens, dramatically, in *Meet Me in the Green Glen*. We are pulled relentlessly back into the characters, into their uncertain sense of themselves, into their recurrent self-discoveries which allow them a momentary impression of reality or joy or triumph which falls away with the next thought or the next intrusion from the outside. All of the characters—the minor as well as the major ones—stop frequently to wonder whether or not they are living in a dream (pleasant or horrible), to worry over the self that they imagine the outside world is seeing, to regret the past and to invent the future. Periodically, one or another of them is struck by a sudden revelation—frequently an interior light—which is a signal for a new beginning, a new birth ("as though she were . . . splitting the chrysalis of that not-new black silk to emerge in some new form") which leads, inevitably, to new disappointment, new loss. Early in the book, a benignly corrupt Washington lawyer leads Murray Guilfort, the book's most dangerous self-doubter, into expensive Chicago sin by explaining that "Illusion . . . is the only truth;" at the end of the book, just before he commits suicide, Murray decides, too late to save himself, that "The dream is a lie, but the dreaming is truth." Given the revelations that pass before us all through the novel, I am reluctant to pick out one as a truth deeper than its thinker's needs. Still, the thrust of the book as a whole and the final ruminations of Cy Grinder suggest that "dreaming" in this sense is a fact of human existence, a process of coping with an unidentifiable self in a world, imperfectly seen and seeing, in which no event—the murder of Sunder, the electrocution of Angelo—is forceful enough to impose a revelation. Since I find myself increasingly suspicious of reality, interior and exterior, and since I momentarily expect rebirth, as I did at twelve and eighteen and thirty-five, I am drawn to the Robert Penn Warren book, but, just as though I were a thematic spin-off myself, I as quickly fall away. I could probably stay with Cassie and Murray and Angelo if the implications were allowed to grow out of their story; I might even ride out the voyage

within a single head; but as the pathetic fallacies burgeon and the thought processes flow, my mind begins to wander. Like Alicia, the fancy Chicago whore in the book, Warren knows that "it takes art to complete nature;" unfortunately, the very devices that work for completion finally denature the characters.

Raymond Rosenthal, Tommaso Landolfi's translator, introduces *Cancerqueen and Other Stories*, the most recent collection of the Italian fabulist's work, with a critical note which is, in fact, a kind of warning to the reader. Expect something unusual, he seems to be saying, but *read* the stories—don't try to solve them as though they were puzzles that had to be worked over with the tools of contemporary criticism. "His stories mean just what they say on the surface," writes Rosenthal and then, doubling back before the obvious question can come into the reader's mind (superficial?), he conjures "a penumbra" and "a long echo." Landolfi's stories are, then, what they are and what they suggest, and the reader most likely to get to them is the one who arrives "without undue cultural apprehensions." An innocent, then—a literate and imaginative innocent, of course—and there is something in what Rosenthal says. I was innocent of Landolfi, at least, when I first ran across a story of his, "Gogol's Wife," in *Encounter* back in 1958, and the surprised—even horrified—delight with which I crashed into that work still shimmers somewhere in my visceral memory. For that reason, I was looking forward to *Cancerqueen* more than any other of the books I am reviewing here, and I was disappointed. It was not simply that there is a wide range of quality among the stories, but that even those I admire failed to recreate that first excitement. It is a critical impropriety, I know, to suggest that the failure may have been mine, that something—my mood, the weather, last night's dinner—could have come between me and the author. It may even be because I came to this volume as a reviewer. Landolfi, I suspect, would distrust me on those grounds, for ironic thrusts at critics surface here and there among the stories, most noticeably in "Cancerqueen," in which the narrator lets his mind and pen wander, forgets his plight (he is trapped in a space ship, fixed in orbit around the earth) long enough to flail out at critics who either "understand, to put it bluntly, nothing" or else worry over details at the expense of the whole vision. Of course, the narrator presumably has no readers, critical or otherwise, and is going crazy to boot. No, my disappointment is more basic—more universal really—than my digestion or my profession. It is, in fact, a fit subject for a Landolfi story, and I am afraid he has already written it in "Fable," in which an old dog tells how she tried and failed to find again the statue which had so entranced her when, as a puppy, she first saw it and, with uncritical admiration, lifted her leg in love. Not that I was a puppy in 1958, but. . . .

Enough of the metaphysics! There is still a volume of short stories

about which I must make . . . uh . . . well . . . objective comments. The stories have been brought together from four collections published in Italy during the 1960s, most of them early in the decade. There is apparently no reason for the order of stories in the present volume; in fact, those originally published as *Tre racconti* (1964)—“The Mute,” “Misdeal,” and “Looking”—which did form a unit—three love stories, if we stretch a point—are here separated from one another. This suggests that each story is to be read for itself and not as part of an overall pattern. Certainly, despite recurrent themes and artistic mannerisms, one does not come away with the feeling that the book is governed by a central attitude, plainly not the “profound existential anguish” that Rosenthal sees in the author. What I find at work in Landolfi is a professional story-teller, one who uses the traditional materials—loss, death, cruelty—sometimes to explore man in his greatest pain, at others simply to play games with the reader. Although there is some variety of style in the book (a few of the stories are simply dialogues), the basic Landolfi mode is a slow, deliberate narrative, rich in detail, beset with digression (“I am always losing the thread of my discourse,” says the “Fable” narrator, “forgive an old story-teller”) which explores the philosophic meaning of events even while they are being recounted. I prefer those stories in which the disintegration of the narrator is the explicit (“Cancerqueen”) or implicit (“Week of Sun”) subject and in which Landolfi’s sense of grotesque invention is given fullest play. Sometimes, as in “Night Must Fall,” a similar mechanism is used with great skill but without—at least for me—the same commanding interest. A number of the stories are fairly straightforward fables, and they tend to be successful within that vein. In “The Sword,” for instance, the hero, having sliced up most of the furnishings in his castle, manages to cleave his beloved from guggle to zatch, using the weapon which he “should have brandished in defense of the good or at least to gain his happiness . . . to destroy the dearest thing he had on earth.” A number of the stories, finally, are more superficial than surface. “The Calculation of Probability,” for instance, is a lady-or-tiger exercise in which the gambler, having ascertained that he has a fifty-fifty chance of failing, hangs himself in the last sentence and thus leaves the reader dangling. “A Family Chat” uses a scifi setting to make a mild satirical point about the uselessness of talk on earth, but the whole story collapses on the last page; in an attempt to explain *talk* to his son, telepathically one assumes, an intergalactic father struggles to define unfamiliar concepts such as *sound* and *atmosphere* and then blows the carefully constructed conceit by comparing the earth people to “our magpies.” These weak examples aside, there are enough good things in *Cancerqueen* to please any reader whose tastes run to the fabulous. Still, I never did find that statue. . . .

In a jacket plug for *One Day*, Eudora Welty said, "Laying sure hands on the *daily* is Wright Morris's forte." His "sure hand" is at work again in *Fire Sermon*, particularly in the first third of this very short novel, in which slowly, deliberately he defines his two main characters, the twelve-year-old Kermit and his 82-year-old "next of kin," his great-uncle Floyd, and sets up the relationship that develops when the old man takes the boy in after the death of his parents. Not that there is much to define in Kermit; he remains tentative, visible only because we see him in the light cast by the old man, a character realized in all his crochettiness. In fact, Uncle Floyd is the only character in *Fire Sermon*; the hippie couple who figure prominently later in the novel—the Weatherman Stanley and his benignly smiling girl—are stereotypes, as thinly perceived as though they had been invented by the old man himself. In the early section of the book, which is often very funny because the old man's prejudices are so outrageous, Morris shows Kermit and his uncle in their trailer home, busy at the simplest activities—eating, shopping, visiting the post office, reading Aunt Viola's letters. The old man, who is convinced that all kids "grow up to be hippies, criminals, drug addicts, sex maniacs or basketball players," mixes his rage at a world that is slipping away from him with a genuine concern for the boy; the boy, who often tries to pretend that he is in no way connected with the eccentric old man, finds himself thinking in patterns that he gets from his uncle. To someone who grew up on movies in which Jackie Cooper reduced Wallace Beery to sudsy softness and Shirley Temple penetrated the iron exterior of Lionel Barrymore, there is something dangerously familiar about some of the early scenes in the book. "You better read it while you've still got the brains you were born with," the old man says, tossing Kermit a religious pamphlet sent by Aunt Viola, and Morris comments, "It was not lost on the boy that this was in the nature of his first compliment."

Both funny and sentimental, then, these early scenes, but the novel is not going to end—as the movies I invoked usually did—in a smilingly tearful two-shot. This novel is not a hands-across-the-generations schmaltzer, but another enactment of inevitable replacement of the old by the young. From the beginning, Morris plants the thematic seeds for what is to come. Although Uncle Floyd is a rather special old man, separating himself from the "old fools" and "old farts" that he must deal with, he belongs to the past. Like the narrator of that earlier "Fire Sermon," Uncle Floyd knows that the nymphs have departed, that the world is in decline; concerning the "simple facts" embodied in the toothless, teenage mother at the laundromat, "He accepts them: believe them he cannot." The ironic thing about the old man is that he is the remains of a rebel who rejected his father, his home and his God, but his act of rebellion,

softened by time and the affection of his father-respecting, God-loving sister, has ceased to have meaning; he has become the "old rascal," the "wicked old scalawag" of Aunt Viola's letters, as necessary as the gentle old lady to the landscape of the past. "The old man in the road would see what he remembered," Morris says, late in the book, after they have got back to Floyd's childhood home, "but the boy's squinting eyes saw only what was there." I doubt that any eyes see only what is there, but the boy certainly cannot see through the old man's eyes and that is clear early on when Kermit finds himself drawn to the Open Grave, the hippie hang-out where he can take and give a "Hi, man" greeting, choosing to stand outside looking in rather than to stay and listen to his uncle's complaining chat with the man in the post office.

Toward the end of Book One, Aunt Viola dies and Floyd decides to take Kermit back to Nebraska where he can grow up properly (that is, in the house Floyd hated and escaped from). The rest of the novel recounts the journey and the homecoming. I found it less interesting than the early chapters, perhaps because the real and psychological bric-a-brac never has the density that it has in the early part of the book. Here, it seems too much in service to theme, too symbolic on occasion (the ox shoe on a pedestal, left stranded when the ground washed away around it). The inevitable things happen. The old man weakens during the drive, gives way to the boy who takes over the wheel; the hitchhiking hippies, when the old man finally consents to pick them up, ally themselves with the boy against his uncle. The home when they finally reach it is no home at all, simply a warehouse for the past. Their first glimpse of the town is the graveyard, where everyone whom Uncle Floyd knew now lies, and the house is packed with furniture, dishes, clothing, tools, rendered functionless by time, everything so packed together that there is hardly room to pass. The one cleared spot is where Viola's rocker sits by a window that gives a view of the graveyard. When the boy finds the old man slumped in that chair, apparently dead, he thinks of him not "as his own great-uncle, Floyd Warner, but another object preserved from the past." The old man is not dead, but when the fire comes (I am never sure whether by accident or a deliberate act by the smiling girl), he bolts and runs, leaving the boy with the young couple, the past in ashes around them. "Fire purifies," the girl says, giving him "her big, warm, friendly smile," but Kermit is already planning on having another look at that ox shoe, certain that "he's going to need all the luck he can get." Although the book ends with the young watching the dawn (yes, Morris really does that), with Kermit sorting himself out as best he can, the pervasive quality of the novel lies in Uncle Floyd and the nostalgic sense of loss in him.

About midway through *The Tenants*, Bernard Malamud's hero,

Harry Lesser, unable to get on with the novel he has been writing for almost ten years, goes into the Museum of Modern Art and looks at the "abstract and fragmented" portrait of a woman painted by Lazar Kohn, a now dead artist who had been briefly a friend of his youth. The picture had never been finished, not the way Kohn intended; after working on it for years he had turned it to the wall, had given up. In time, persuaded by friends, he had sold the painting to the museum, and there it hangs, an unfinished finished picture that increases Lesser's unhappiness at not having brought "his book to its inevitable and perfected end." If Lesser rejects the analogy between his book and Kohn's picture, Malamud is less hung-up on traditional form. "Or perhaps it was the painter's purpose to complete by abandoning, because abandonment or its image was presently a mode of completion?" The question mark is in Lesser's mind as he thinks about the picture, but the sentence, without the qualifying mark, seems particularly appropriate to Malamud's novel which is about the effort of a number of people to reach ends (Lesser sees Kohn's picture as the portrait of "a woman trying to complete herself through her own will, as willed by the painter") and his own inconclusive conclusion which finally leaves them and us uncompleted.

The novel Lesser is trying to finish is called *The Promised End* and it is about a novelist (called Lazar Cohen at one point) trying to finish a novel and hoping in the process to learn to love by writing about it. Lesser never finishes his novel nor—even after the manuscript is destroyed—does he abandon it for that other possible end, marriage with Irene, whom he thinks he loves. "Art my ass," says Levenspiel, Lesser's landlord, "in this world it's heart that counts." Art-heart, the ends of both, for Lesser, lie in the novel that reaches no end. Irene, who is at one point specifically identified with the Kohn painting, is trying to end her affair with Willie Spearmint, a black writer; to end her analysis; to end her acting career. The Willie affair gives way to the one with Harry, but, for Irene, it is simply more of the same (book first, love second). She goes off to San Francisco before Malamud's novel stops which means that she necessarily breaks off affair, analysis and career, but a breaking-off is not an end. She is presumably still a woman "trying to complete herself." Willie and Harry become involved in one another's lives, one another's books, when Willie, as a squatter, sets up shop in one of the deserted apartments in the building where Harry remains, the last paying tenant, unwilling to move away from the place where his novel was born and—so he believes—must reach its end. Willie cannot finish his book either, particularly after Harry infects him with ideas about form. He gives up at one point, when he discovers that Harry has stolen both Irene and his simple pleasure in writing, but he returns and the garbage can out front, which Harry picks

through, turns up evidence that he begins and begins and begins, a story, a novel, a poem, a song which he cannot end. Inconclusive hate, like inconclusive love, moves through Malamud's novel. Harry and Willie function not only as writers, but as white man-black man in an encounter that has no end. Willie, on paper, may long for an American Jewish holocaust, but he returns to the house, to Harry's distant presence, and Harry is never able to free himself from the fact or the idea of Willie. The two ends that Malamud provides are the bizarre double wedding in which Willie and Irene are joined in an unlikely Jewish ceremony while Lesser and Mary, a black girl, enact a farcical African village ritual ("an act of love, the end of my book, if I dared," says Lesser); and the violent finish in which Lesser's axe sinks into Willie's brain while Willie's saber cuts off "the white's balls." Both are fantasy—evocations of Lesser's writer's imagination running amok, away from the page which is its usual home. The last word is *Levenspiel's* for he, too, is caught in a world without end. His building is abandoned, but because of Harry it cannot reach its end, demolition. He keeps begging Harry to have mercy on him, to accept an ever-increasing bribe to vacate—always his last word. Finally, he offers ten thousand dollars, threatens to sell to Tishman, declares, "Take my word, I am finished with you. This is the end." It is not. On the last page, he is begging "the both of you" to have mercy and the book "ends" with the word *mercy* repeated 113 times and with no concluding period. As the Bessie Smith epigraph says, "I got to make it, I got to find the end. . . ."

The difficulty with *The Tenants*, for me, is that the book itself is never as interesting as the aesthetic, psychological and social assumptions that give it its open-ended form. Much of it is too familiar—inevitable echoes of *The Assistant* and "Angel Levine," ironic reportage on the black-lit scene, fairly standard interracial "black" comedy with the usual anti-Semitic and racist (Jew and nigger) overtones. I found myself wishing that I were reviewing the book for *Time* or some other magazine that puts a premium on being cute so that I could dismiss it by wondering if all those non-ends justified the means.

There are any number of orange suns, the orange light of a lantern, a drifting orange on the canal after the bus accident, the innocent orange of the marguerites, the dried-blood orange of the chastity belt and the scent of orange blossoms in the grape-gobbling scene, but there are no blood oranges in John Hawkes's *The Blood Oranges*, except perhaps for Fiona's "naked orange breasts," on display in one of the early intimate scenes shared by the four central characters. After I had written that sentence, I went into the kitchen and ate an orange (neither blood nor good, since the first Floridas are not in as I write this) that was simply an orange, more pulp than nuance, and I am now ready to face up to Hawkes's novel. It is, to put it

baldly, which Hawkes never would, the story of two couples who become, briefly, a community of shared sexuality, hetero only, which collapses in disaster when the reluctant one of the four—a male member, to use a locution that might have dropped from the narrator's lips—unable to face the psychological (spiritual?) pressure of the openness implicit in such an understanding, hangs himself. The novel—since that is not the way Hawkes works—is neither a simple psychological study nor a conventional narrative. It is told in retrospect by one of the four, Cyril, the white bull of Love's tapestry, the “singer of sex,” the “headless god,” the high priest of multiplicity in marriage, and it is not only the story of the exploded idyll, but of his present sexlessness (his wife, Fiona, has gone off with the dead Hugh's children) which he sees as a temporary condition, a moment of stasis before he reaches out to touch either Rosella, his peasant housekeeper, or Catherine, the widow, and to begin still another pattern in Love's tapestry. That tapestry, which becomes something of a bore as Cyril keeps alluding to it, is presumably the structural source of the novel, for the story is told in fragments, a scene here, a scene there, with a fractured chronology that constantly forces the reader to reset each incident in time; since the death of Hugh, promised early in the book, is not delivered until the end, the whisper of conventional structure sifts through the novel and makes me suspect that there is really little to be gained by the dislocations in time.

The action takes place on an unidentified seacoast (hence, the otherwise suspect references to Illyria) where the four characters loom large in their separation—physical, verbal, social, psychological—from the tiny, troll-like natives who live in a world of sediment, dusty relics, ruined churches and castles, decorated with “familiar” poisoned cups and “usual” dog skeletons. This godlike apartness sets up the novel for the myth-makers, and they will find considerable help in the self-conscious allusions, the goats that scamper in and out, the grape arbor that suffers from pathetic fallacy, the inevitable blood (from the sullen child's nose, as lubricant for the sliding boat), the stump of Hugh's arm that refuses to keep its physiological place (during the erotic photography session it “was impatient to wag, to flex, to rise into action”) and, most of all, the four main events which, for Cyril at least, have visionary meaning—the bus wreck, the launching of the boat, the dog's funeral and the descent into the dungeons of the old castle (“the dark caves of the heart”) where the chastity belt is found. With Hawkes, I confess, I am never very sure what is expected of me. I can play myth games if the occasion demands (the publicity releases and the jacket copy seem to take the whole thing seriously) and if Hawkes insists (he sometimes does, as a few of the stage directions of his plays indicate), but I cannot help feel that in this case the myth-maker is the butt of the joke. Since no one doubts Hawkes's craft as a writer, there is an exterior niceness

to the juxtaposition when Cyril admires Hugh "for so much craft, for so much comic design," as though the two were necessarily one, as they have been on other Hawkesian occasions. The "comic design" in this book must certainly be no mythic pattern, no structural or thematic derivation from the story, but the narration itself. For this is Cyril's story—in the telling not the told. He comes across as a fat, dead white sensualist, incapable of pain or compassion, stuffed with conceit and engrossed with conceits, a man that can best be characterized through his own description: "I whose handsome and bespectacled face had always stood for sensuous rationality . . ." He hunts for omens in copulating birds, passes aesthetic judgments on the simplest remarks, reads the other characters as though they were written in his language, fails to hear what I do in Fiona's "Don't say anything, Cyril. Don't spoil it." If words can spoil, Cyril has those words. He goes a-maying with the children and batters them with the Latin names of flowers and the information that Theophrastus was "the father of botany;" no wonder Meredith "scowled." In the narration, he is given to descriptions such as "to me Fiona's two firm breasts suddenly became the bursting irises of a young white owl's wide-open eyes" and, for the physical separation after sex, "the naked twins of our invented constellation were gone." In one mock erotic scene Fiona's eyes are "two doves frozen" on one page only to become "dying doves" on the next. When he is being fairly simple, Cyril refers to their "foursome," but elsewhere in the book he thinks of them as "our quaternion." A quaternion, in ordinary usage, is simply a set of four persons or things, but, in mathematics, as surely both Hawkes and his narrator know, it is made up of one real, three complex numbers. The "comic design" of *The Blood Oranges*, I suspect, depends on our recognizing and responding to a disagreement between Cyril and his creator about which of the quaternion is the "real" one. It is a clever idea and often a successful one, but Cyril is finally such a tiresome man that his mytho-aesthetic maunderings, like his self-congratulatory sex passages, become almost unreadable. If by any chance we are to take him and them seriously, the novel would lose its sustaining virtue.

Coming in the Hudson Review, 1972:

PHILIP HOBSBAUM: *Calvinism in Action: The Super-ego
Triumphant*

JAMES MERRILL: *Days of 1935—a long poem*

R. G. VLIET: *The Third Window—a story*

RICHARD PEVEAR: *On the Cantos of Ezra Pound*

GUY DAVENPORT: *Robot—a story*

NIRALA: *Remembering Saroj and other poems*

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1. *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (Wrede, 1970)

2. & 3. *Cold Days* (Kovacs, 1966)

4. *Baltic Tragedy* (Bergensträhle, 1966)

5. *Kes* (Loach, 1970)

Fringe of Blue Grey

1968 87 x 31"

acrylic on canvas

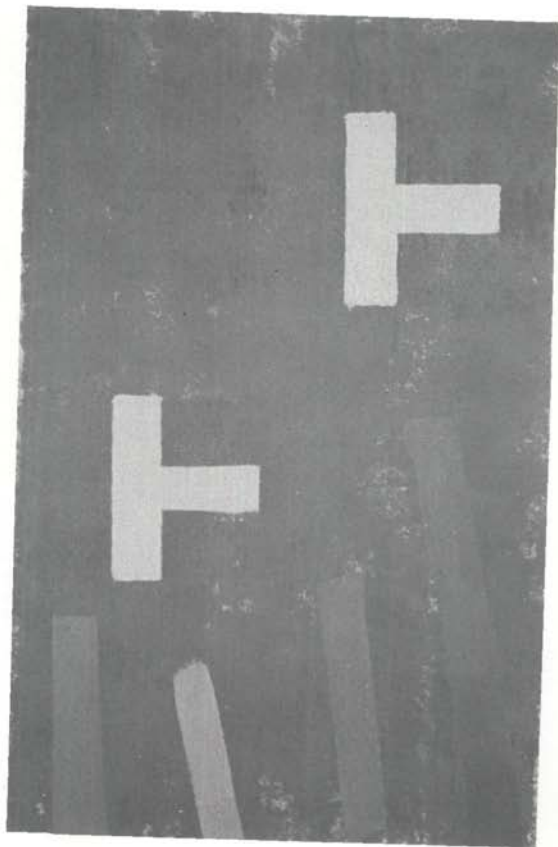
(coll: Mr. and Mrs. David Mirvish)

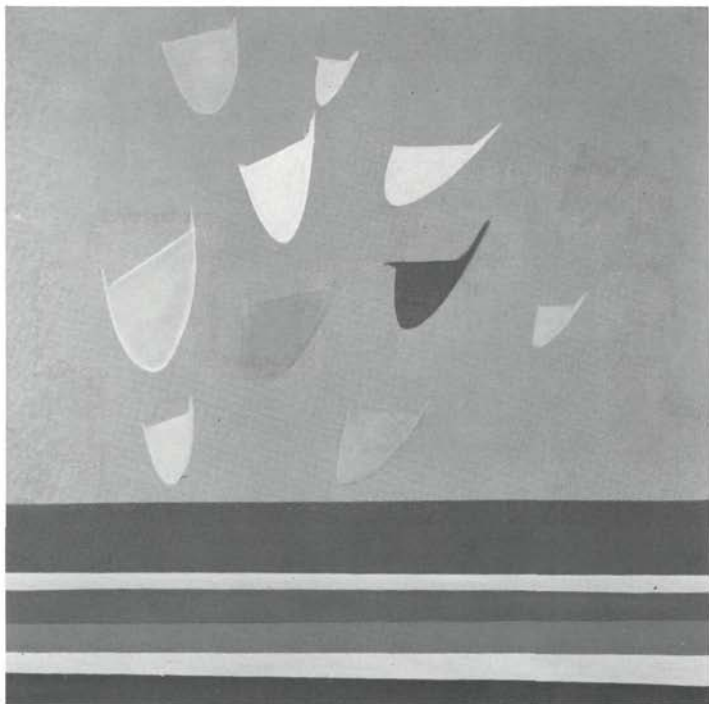
Two Road Marks

1970 59 x 37½"

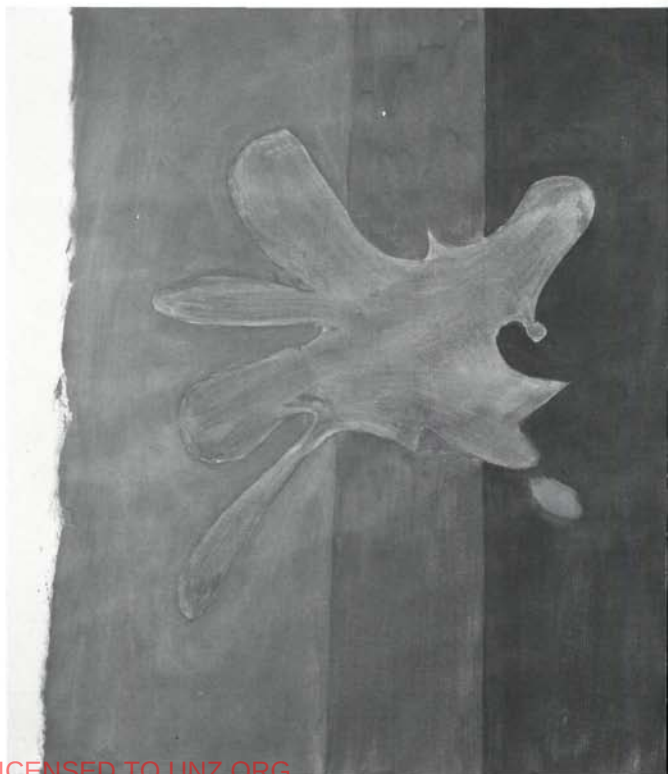
acrylic on canvas

(coll: Mr. A. Baker, Toronto)





Onslaught
1969 56 x 56"
acrylic on canvas
(coll: Mr. and Mrs.
David Mirvish)

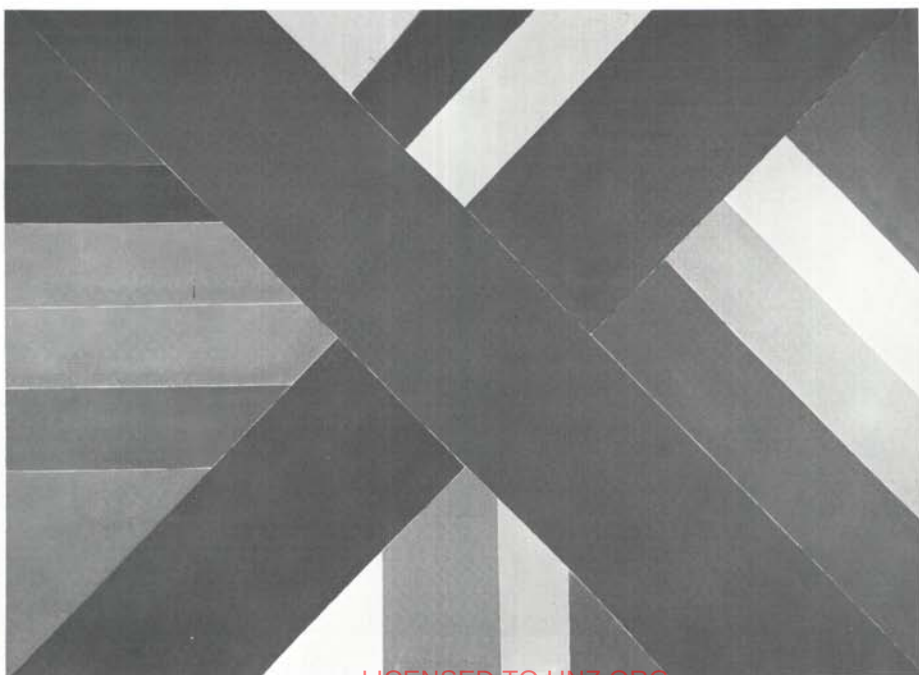


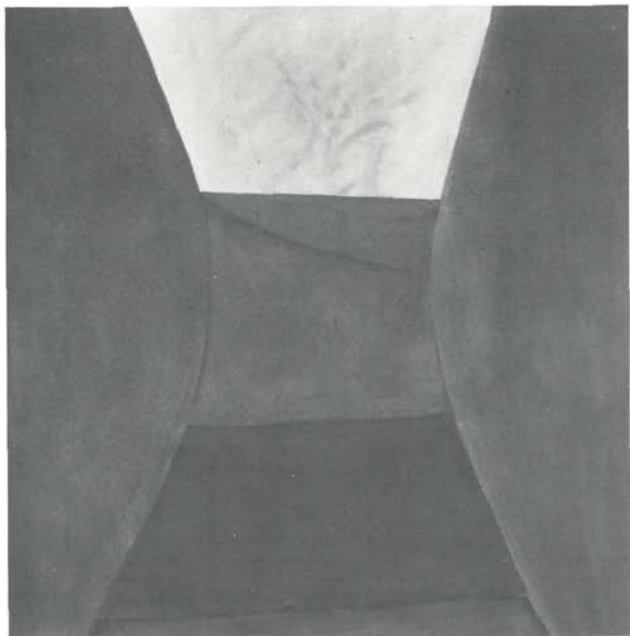
Paris #1
1962 80 x 70"
acrylic resin on
canvas
(coll: Mr. and Mrs.
David Mirvish)



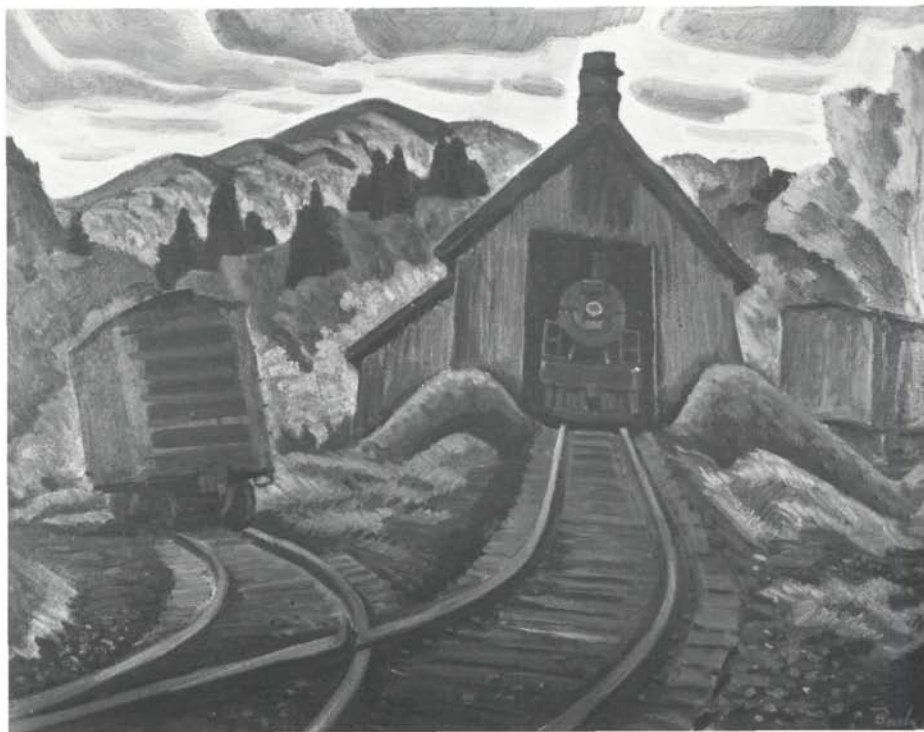
Untitled
1952 19¼ x 32"
watercolour
(coll: the artist)

English Visit
1967 82 x 111"
acrylic on canvas
(coll: Mrs. E. Mirvish)





Pink Blossom
1965 72 x 70"
oil on canvas
(coll: Alkis Klonaridis)



Engine House
1942 25 x 32 1/4"
oil on board
(coll: the artist)



BRAQUE

Trees at L'Estaque

oil on canvas $31 \times 22\frac{5}{8}$ "
(collection Douglas Cooper,
France)



DUFY

Green Trees at L'Estaque

oil on canvas

$28\frac{1}{2} \times 23\frac{1}{2}$ "

(collection Henri Gaffié
France)



BRAQUE

Fishing Boats

oil on canvas $36 \times 28\frac{3}{4}$ "

(collection John Beck, Texas)

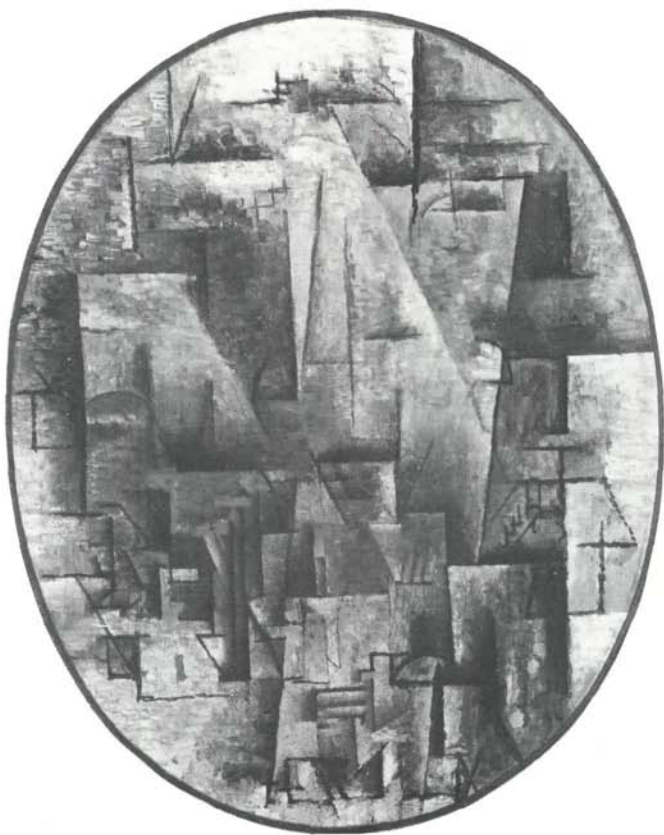


PICASSO

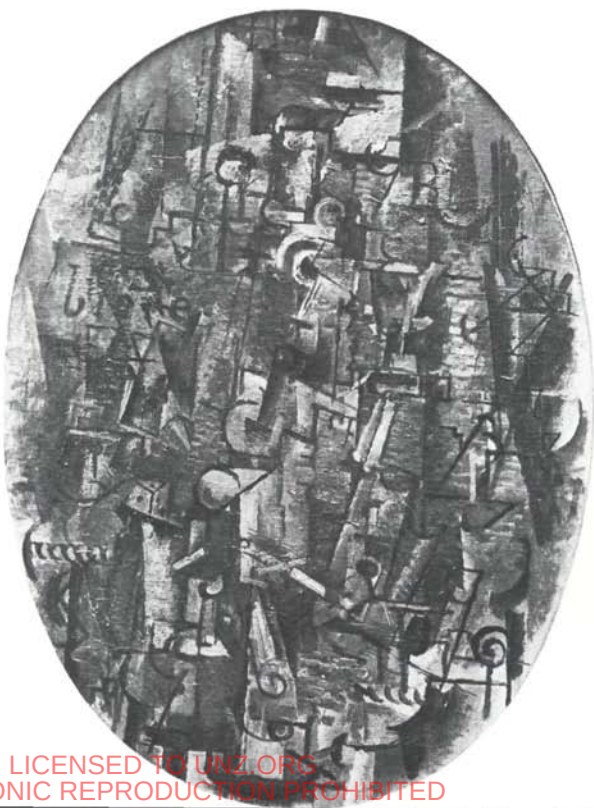
Seated Woman

oil on canvas $36\frac{1}{4} \times 29\frac{1}{2}$ "

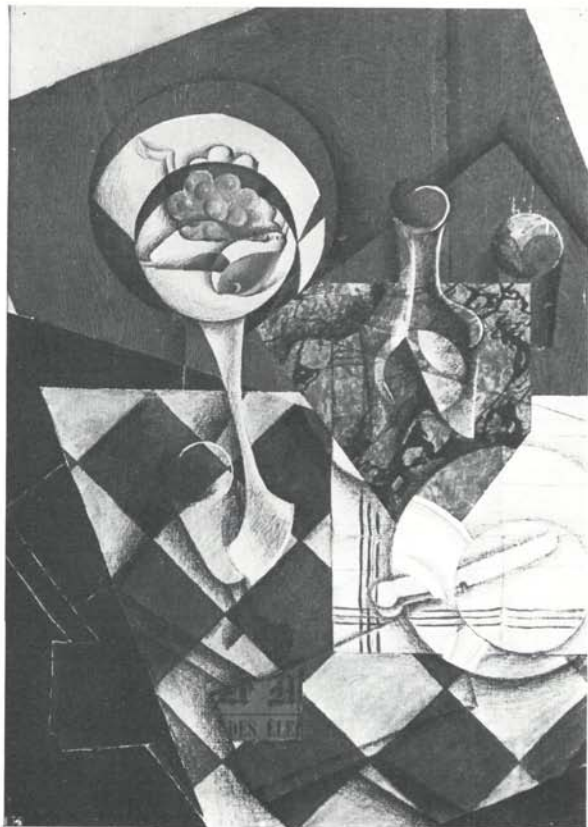
(collection Douglas Cooper,
France)



PICASSO
La Pointe de la Cité
 oil on canvas $35\frac{1}{2} \times 28''$
 (Norton Simon, Inc.
 Museum of Art)



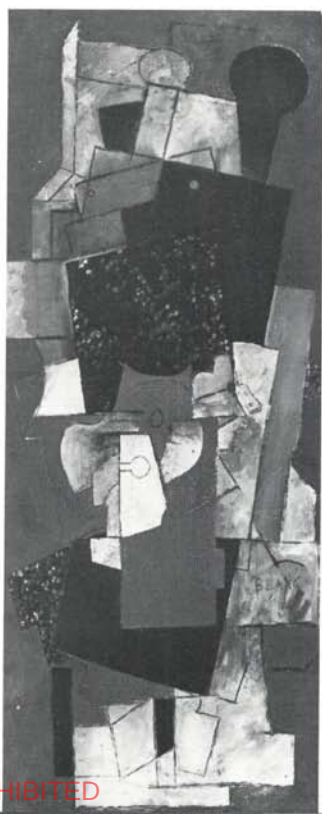
BRAQUE
Still Life with Dice and Pipe
 oil on canvas $31\frac{1}{2} \times 23''$
 (collection Robert Eichholz,
 Washington, D. C.)



GRIS

Fruit Dish and Carafe
papier collé on canvas
36 $\frac{1}{4}$ " $\times$ 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

(Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller,
Otterlo, Netherlands)

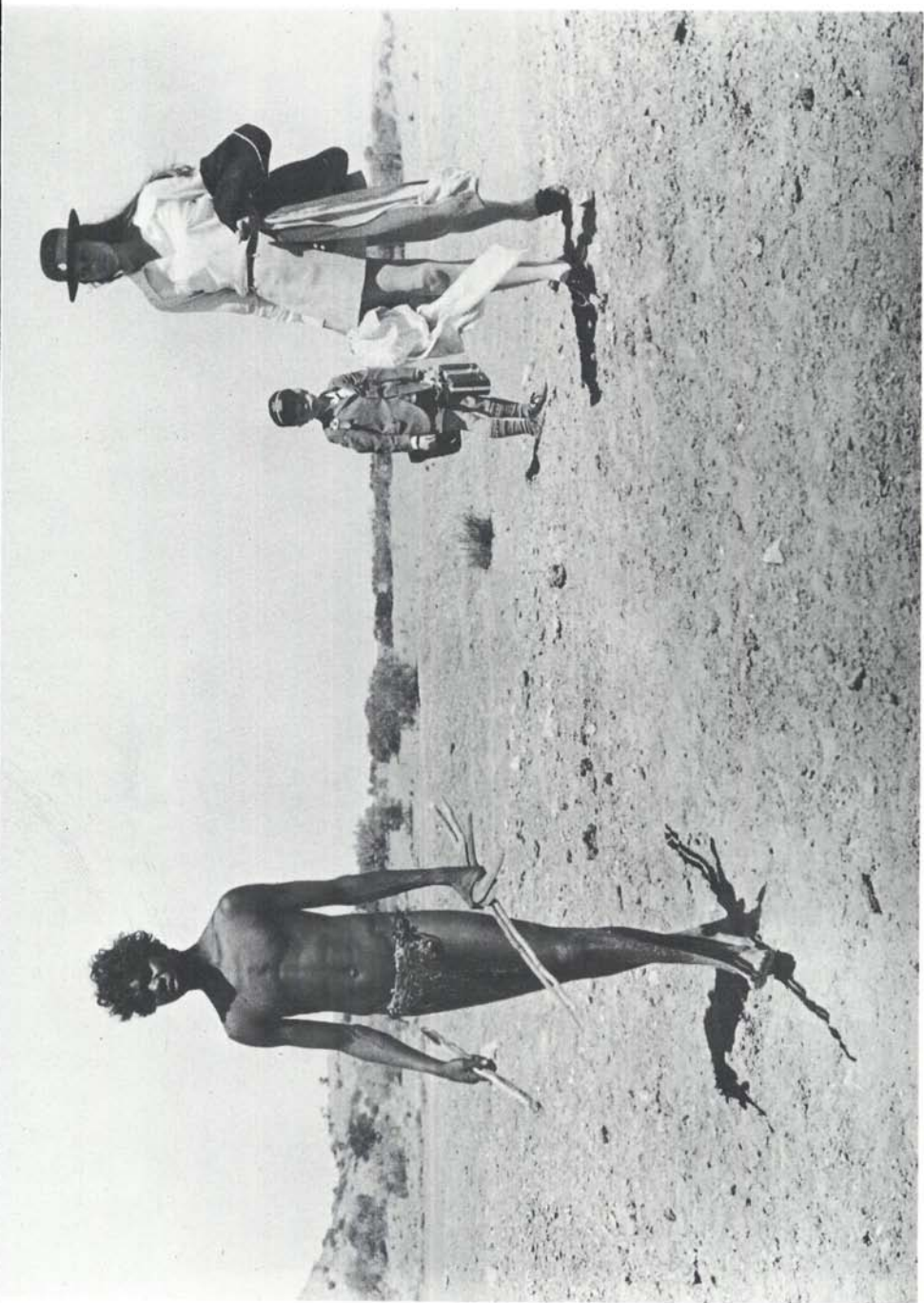


PICASSO

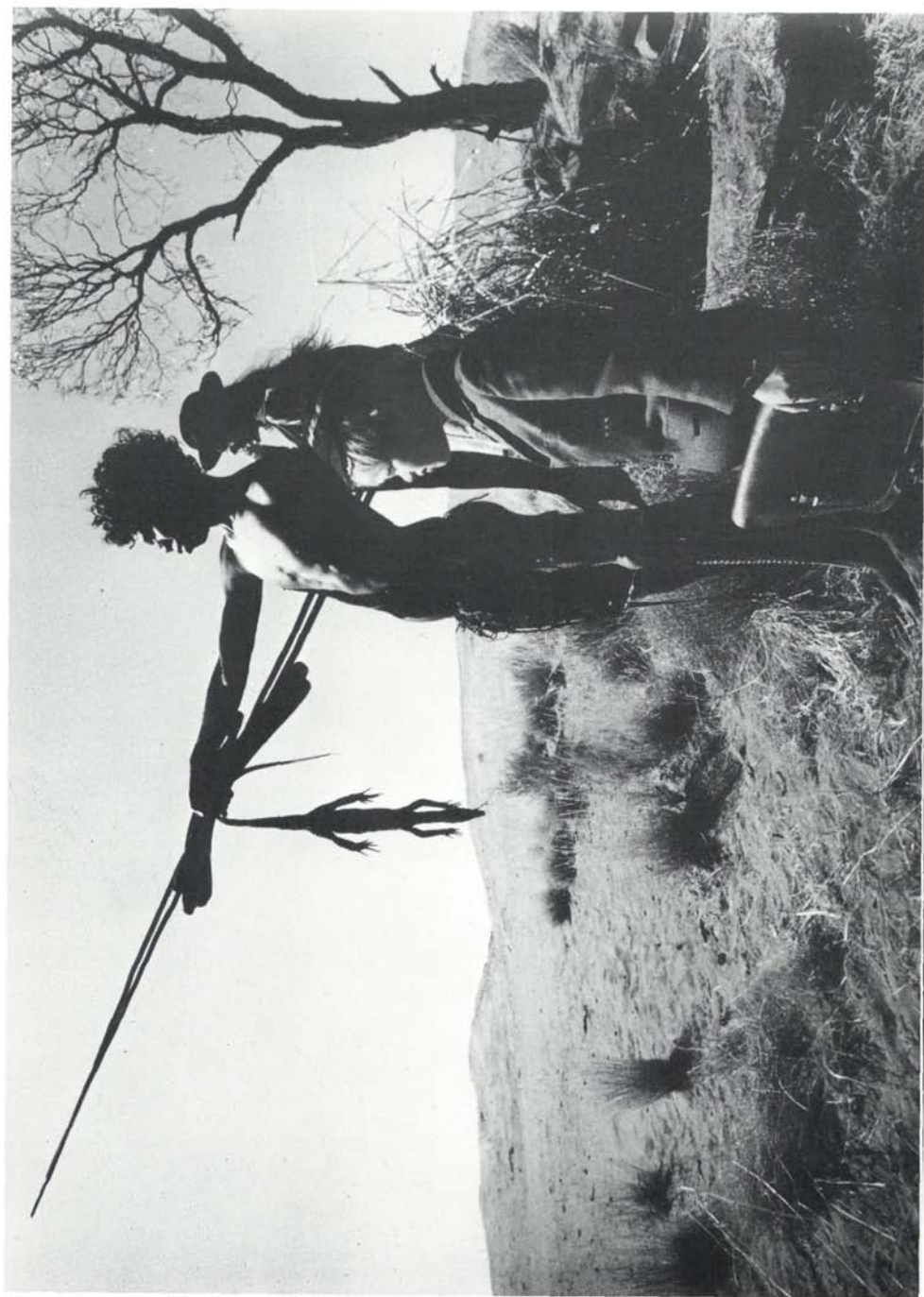
Woman with Guitar
oil on canvas

72 $\frac{3}{4}$ " $\times$ 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

(collection Norton Simon, Los
Angeles)



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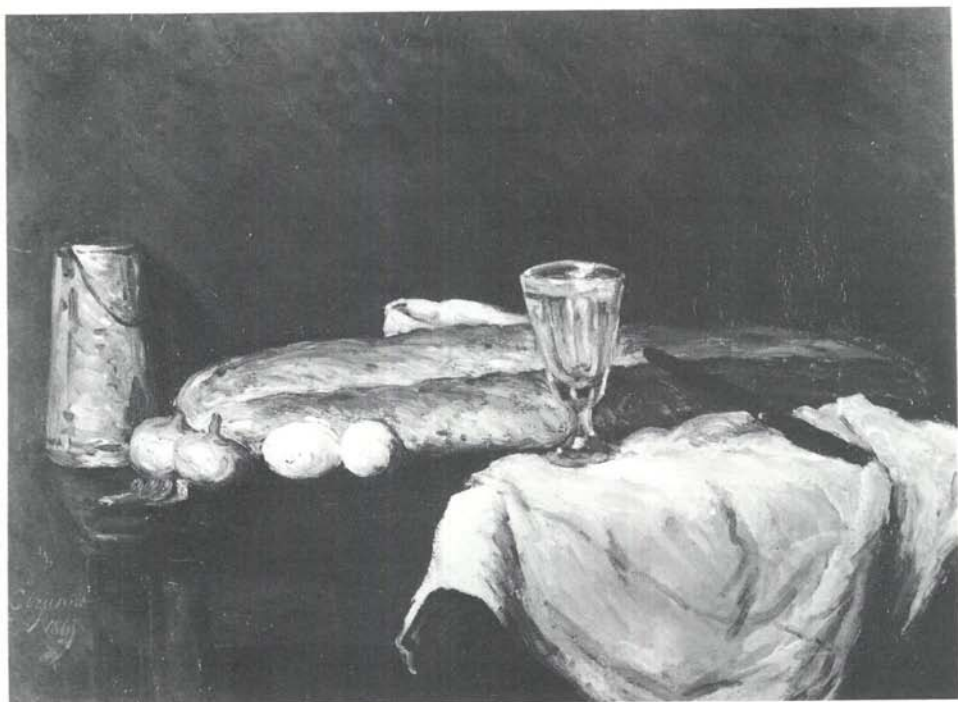
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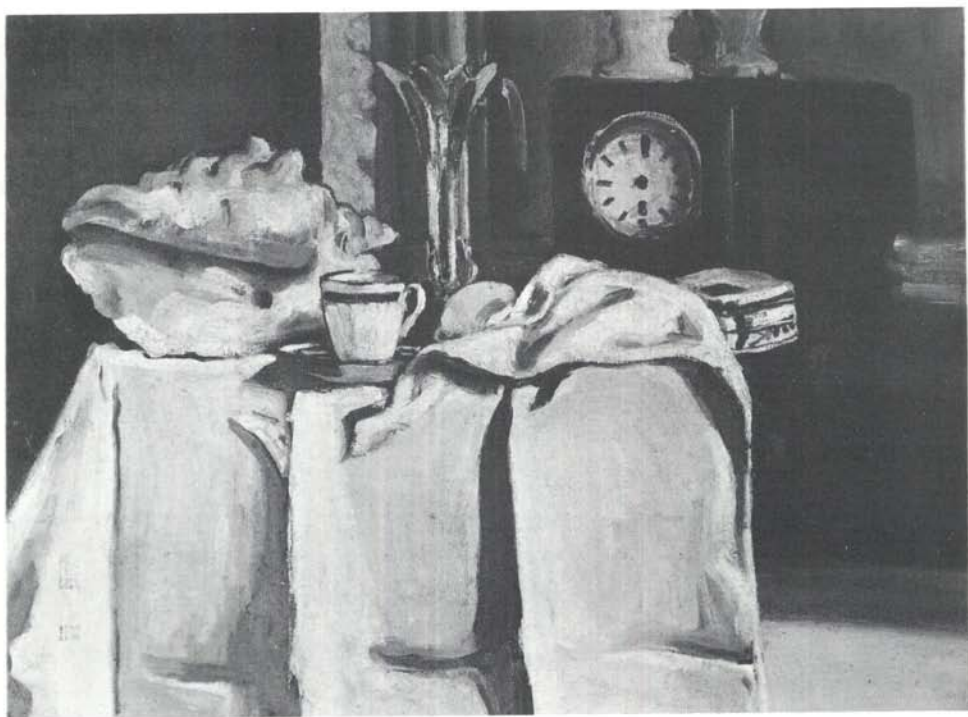


Still Life with Bread and Eggs

1865 25¼ × 30"

oil on canvas

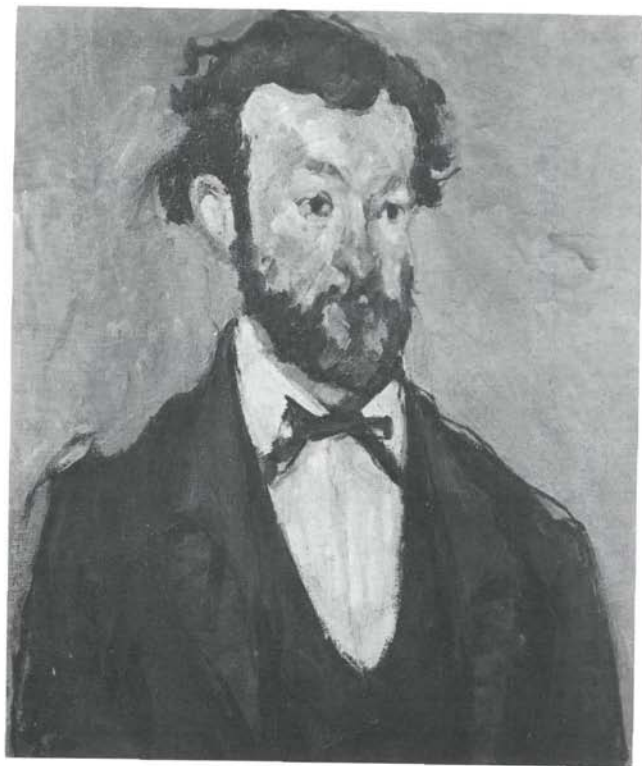
(Cincinnati Art Museum)



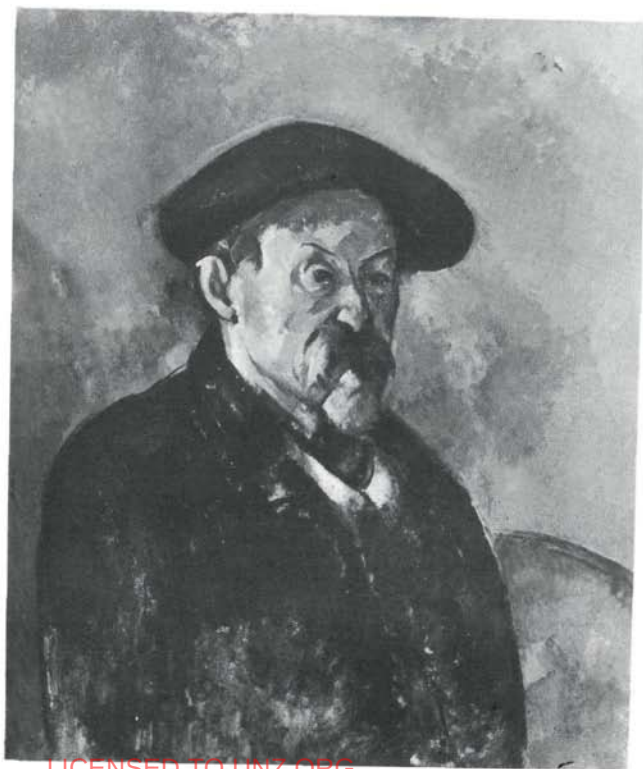
The Black Clock

1869 21¾ × 29¼" oil on canvas

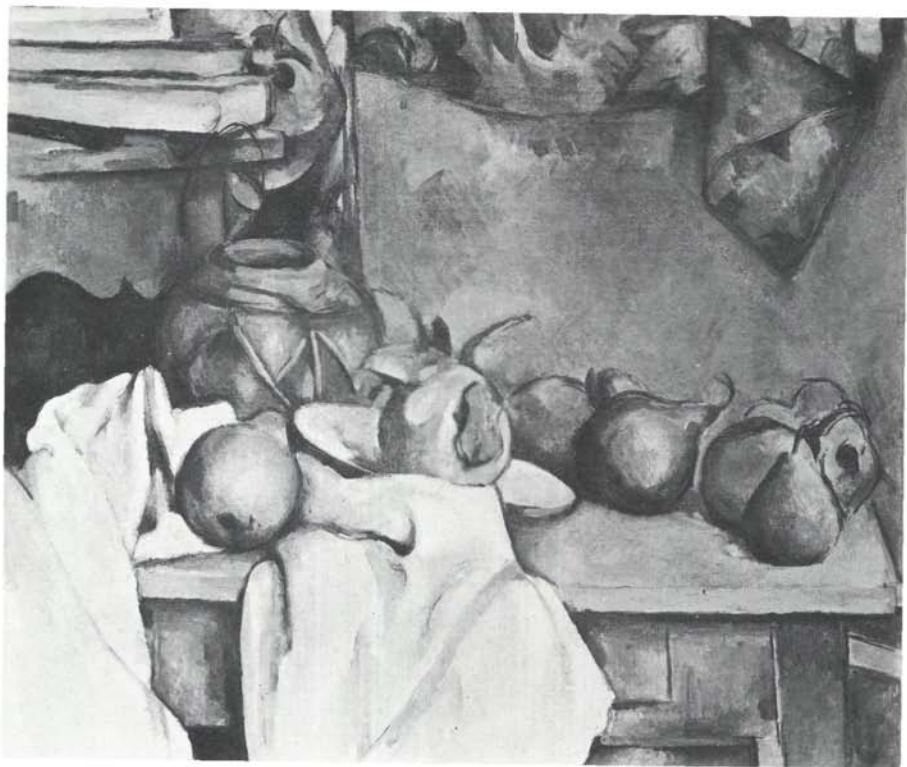
(Stavros S. Niarchos)



Portrait of Antoine Valabrègue
1874-5
oil on canvas
24½ × 20"
(Mrs. Hugo L. Moser)



Self Portrait with a Beret
1900 25 × 20"
oil on canvas
(private collection)



Ginger Pot with Pomegranate and Pears

1890-1893 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 21 $\frac{7}{8}$ "

oil on canvas

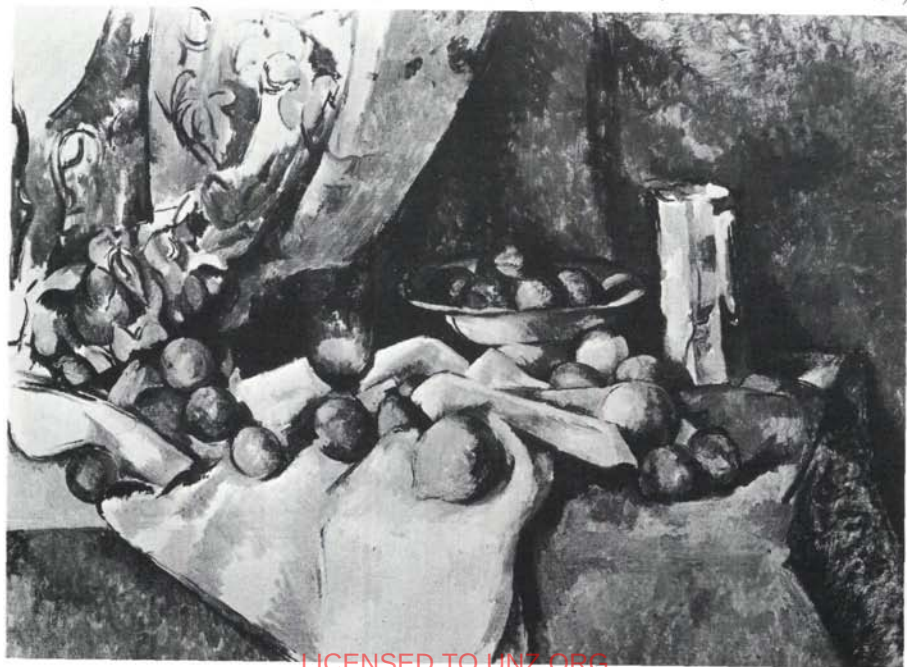
(The Phillips Collection, Washington, D. C.)

Still Life with Apples

1895-98 27 × 36 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

oil on canvas

(The Museum of Modern Art; Lillie P. Bliss collection)





The Balcony

1900 22 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{8}$ "

watercolor and pencil on paper

(Philadelphia Museum of Art; A. E. Gallatin collection)